

Training Camp
Preview Issue



Vol. 33, No. 21

Dolphin

DIGEST

July 2005 (881)

\$3.00

CAMIE SAIBAN!

Plenty of questions
as new era begins

Inside:

- O.J. on Ricky
- Tribute to Bowens
- Linehan Q&A
- Seau fired up



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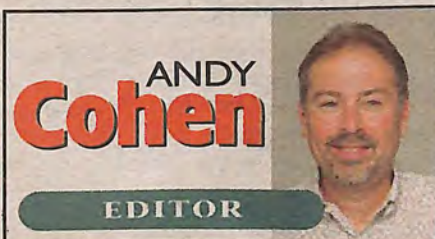


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Shhh! This team could be good

Changes are everywhere. In personnel. In philosophy. In guidelines. In expectations. But what does it all mean?

The Miami Dolphins begin the 40th training camp of their notewor-



**ANDY
Cohen**

EDITOR

thy existence amid significant questions that follow a 4-12 season and an almost complete overhaul of the franchise.

Was the 2004 season an aberration? Has Nick Saban had enough time to correct some of the most glaring errors of the previous regime? Is it too much to expect the Dolphins to quickly become formidable again?

These are the unsolved mysteries that now hang over this team like late-afternoon thunderheads.

While it is clear that one offseason is not enough to revamp a roster that was woefully insufficient a season ago, keep in mind that this is a league of parity where every year there is a story of a bad team becoming good because all the right ingredients fall neatly into place.

There is no doubt that this could happen to the Miami Dolphins. With the coaching staff that Saban has assembled, with some of the free agents he has signed, with the draft that he put together, with the potential upside of an All-Pro running back returning after a one-year hiatus, you can easily paint a picture filled with bright colors and sunny days.

Granted, there is little room for error. So many players need to step up in a big way for this to happen. But the point here is that it can happen. As much as Saban would like you to focus on small gains instead of big victories, he wouldn't have brought in a veteran quarterback like Gus Frerotte, wouldn't have signed veteran defenders like Kevin Carter and Vonnie Holiday, wouldn't have told Ricky Williams to come on down if he was giving up on this season before it started. There's not a chance of that.

Saban, you see, is an impatient man. He wins wherever he goes and he usually wins in a hurry. Don't for a minute think he is incapable of accomplishing a similar feat here. We're not talking greatness here, but you don't have to be great to get double-digit wins in the NFL. You have to be smart. And lucky. And make a few moves that strike gold.

Why can't Saban go 3-for-3 in his first season?

There is no questioning he is smart. You watch him operate, listen to him talk, evaluate his decisions, analyze the staff he has assembled, and you



Veteran quarterback Gus Frerotte very well might become a perfect fit for the Dolphins offense.

Photo/DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins

see a man capable of achieving lofty heights. Just look at that coaching staff. Without hesitation, the Dolphins offense will be significantly better this season because Scott Linehan has installed a system far more potent than the previous one (was there a previous one?) and because Hudson Houck has the rare ability to build a quality offensive line literally overnight. There is smarts everywhere you look on the second floor of the Dolphins training complex.

While we can't predict whether the Dolphins will be lucky, this team is certainly due for some positive karma. It seemed everything that could go wrong last season did go

wrong. Dave Wannstedt liked to call it "the perfect storm." Maybe it's time for those clouds to clear.

As for the moves that strike gold, I'll take my chances with these three:

- Frerotte at quarterback: The belief here is that he was brought in to start because he is familiar with Linehan's system and because he is ready to make the most of this chance after backing up Daunte Culpepper the last two seasons. People in the know around the NFL say Frerotte has the arm strength and the ability to be a good starting quarterback. And "good" might just be exactly what this offense needs.

- Brown at running back. Sure,

everyone wants to talk about Ricky this and Ricky that. But let's be realistic here: If everything works out, he'll be suspended for the first four games and who knows what we'll get after that. What the Dolphins need is the second overall pick in the draft to play like the second overall pick in the draft. If Brown is as good as advertised, Ricky may just turn out to be nothing more than a well-publicized insurance policy.

- Vernon Carey at tackle. One of my greatest beefs with last year's staff was that Carey never got a real chance to show what he could do. What value was there for a first-round pick to ride the bench on a lousy team? Didn't make sense. But this season we'll find out about Carey and after an offseason of learning under Houck, the Dolphins desperately need this big man to step forward.

Sure, there is a laundry list of other things the Dolphins need. There are major concerns on the defensive line, at cornerback and at safety. And nobody can know for sure how long it will take these players to adjust to a system that is as complicated as it is diverse.

Swallow all of this and you could probably make a case for 6-10 as easily as you can for 10-6. But look closely at this roster. You still have Zach Thomas and Jason Taylor and Sam Madison on defense and Chris Chambers and Randy McMichael on offense.

As much as I have battled to make sense of last year's 4-12 nightmare, the one lasting impression is this: The Dolphins did not have the talent level to produce that kind of season. This was a franchise that simply fell victim to squabbling on the coaching staff, to its star player turning his back on the team at the worst possible time, to some illogical personnel decisions and to some bounces that are still impossible to explain.

So here we are now, a new training camp, a new coaching staff, about 15 or so new players. We won't insult your intelligence by predicting a joy ride into the playoffs. But if this team can start strong, if the training camp we are about to embark on can consist of more straightaways than curves, if the core of this team can, for the most part, remain healthy, the Miami Dolphins could emerge as one of the NFL's annual feel good stories.

A far-fetched dream? We'll start finding out in a hurry.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Dolphin Digest you will receive will begin our weekly cycle, which runs through the regular season (with the exception of the bye week). It will be printed on Aug. 7 and will include a complete recap of Dan Marino's Hall of Fame induction.

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On the Cover ...

First-year coach Nick Saban and the new-look Dolphins have a lot of work to do this summer during a training camp that promises to be interesting.

Cover Photo/ DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins

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Creating competition is key

Don't expect me to start announcing who is first team and who is second team in training camp. I don't believe in that and I never have.

This is the most overrated thing that I have seen. It's a product of our society. Everybody makes a big deal out of

**NICK
Saban**

HEAD COACH



knowing as soon as possible who is going to start and who is working out with the first team.

Don't get me wrong, I think continuity and confidence working together is important in players. But I also think you need to create competition and the thought that everybody knows they have an opportunity to compete and there is something worthwhile in it for them if they do a good job.

So if I say it's most important that we get this unit practicing together, then that means all the other guys on the team could be saying, "I've got no chance to play, why should I work hard?" It kind of defeats the whole purpose.

It's all about evaluation. The evaluation has to be done in a way where players can develop and players can have motivation to develop, which competition creates. At the same time put them in position where they get enough reps to be effective. But I don't think putting everyone on the same team so they get enough reps is always the answer. You need competition to create positive performances. When you try to put players in categories too quickly, you actually deflate somebody else's ability to continue to develop. That's not what you want.

Sometimes as coaches you get affected by what everyone else is saying or thinking. That can't happen.

I don't want people to not understand what I'm saying. Chemistry is important. But there is a fine line here, and all I get are questions about who is



Zach Thomas and the other longtime Dolphins will find things a little different during this training camp.

Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL

starting and how many reps are they getting. It matters, but it doesn't matter to that degree.

Is it important to have a starting quarterback early on so he gets all the reps? If the guy is good enough, I'm not sure he needs all those reps.

The best players I ever coached, I hate to say it, would still be the best

players no matter how much they practiced. Michael Dean Perry was the best defensive lineman I coached in Cleveland, and sometimes he didn't practice. I'm not saying it's OK not to practice because most players need to practice. So just because Michael didn't practice, did that mean our defensive line couldn't play as well in the game? I

think a lot of this stuff has been used as reasons for excuses.

It's very important that we pace ourselves during the preseason, which has five preseason games, to make sure everybody is at their best when the games count for real. It needs to be done with every player. We'll try to keep evaluating that every day and every practice.

People ask me about the importance of winning in the preseason. Preseason games aren't important unless you don't win them. Then it becomes a big negative. We're all competitors. We like to have success. It creates momentum and confidence when you do win preseason games, and players learn how to win and learn that it's not OK not to win.

But at the same time you don't want to put your players at some risk in the preseason that could be detrimental to the team's long-term ability to be successful. You want these games to be building your team toward the season, but not be tearing it down.

There are two aspects of that. Psychologically, it's important to win. Physically, it's important not to overplay some players to win. So you have to create a balance that makes a lot of sense for everybody.

The quarterback position will receive a lot of attention this summer, and that's understandable. I'm pleased with what I've seen so far from Gus Frerotte and A.J. Feeley.

But the most important thing for us at the quarterback position is that both quarterbacks continue to improve and develop through the course of the season because there will probably be times when we'll need both to play well and contribute. That, to me, is more important now than making one guy first team and one guy second team because in doing that you may kill the one that's No. 2.

I'm excited that training camp is here. Like I said to the players on the last day of minicamp, "I just loves it. I loves it out here." I really do. I know

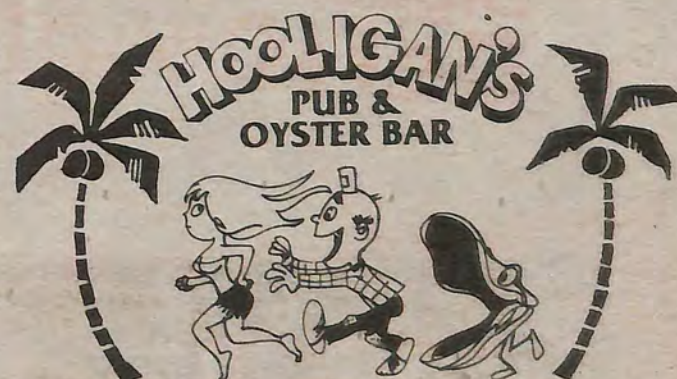
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SABAN, from page 5

the other part of it, the business part, is just as important. But I'm a coach and that's what I really enjoy doing.

I always tell players about training camp; if there was an easy way to do it, we would do it. It is very difficult. It's hard. Everybody needs to have the mind-set that it's going to be difficult. But I also think you can be efficient and effective in how you control the workload and the amount of hitting you do.

A really good barometer is this: There are always two or three guys on your team that are in great condition, that can run all day, that never get tired and always practice well. When you see those guys starting to wear out, then that's a good time to say time to ease up a little.

My coaching style in training camp will be no different than my coaching style in the offseason minicamps. I'm always involved in every area. I coach the players. I want to affect the whole team. It's important that everyone on the team knows that they are being affected. Doesn't matter whether they play offense, defense or special teams.

But I also have a tremendous amount of experience in certain areas, and I would be cheating this organization if I didn't contribute what I can contribute in those areas. That's a little more on defense and a little more on special teams. I played quarterback on

"For us to get better, we have to play fast and at a high tempo, but the safety of the game is a lot better if we stay up, we don't cut each other, and we don't throw the runners to the ground."

offense, but I've never tried to be the offensive coordinator and call the plays like a lot of defensive coaches do. That's worked well in my career so far.

Everything we do in training camp, just like it was in the offseason, is geared toward getting the players ready to play 16 regular season games and seeing what kind of success they can have.

If you make it as hard as you can make it, that's not necessarily the most efficient way to accomplish that. You have to take the environment and the circumstances and the type of team you have into consideration in what is the best way to approach that training camp.

Philosophically, I'm not big on two-a-days in the climate we live in. I think it's important that players have a significant amount of time to re-hydrate. I have a 2-1-2-1 philosophy in order to achieve that. In other words, we'll

practice in the morning, at night and the next afternoon. It's more effective and efficient, I believe, in teaching. In doing this in college, we had less injuries, we had less heat-related problems and we actually had more players practicing more days doing it this way than if we had more practices.

It's important to our success that we keep our best players on the field and, at the same time, get them ready to play.

We have several tempos that we like to use in practice. We have a teaching tempo. We have a walk-through tempo. We have a tag tempo. We have a thud tempo where the offensive player knows we're going to be a little more physical. But in none of those situations do we want players on the ground. I think there is a significant number of injuries that occur in football when people are on the ground.

For us to get better, we have to play

fast and at a high tempo, but the safety of the game is a lot better if we stay up, we don't cut each other, and we don't throw the runners to the ground. If you did a study on how many guys get hurt in football on low blocks, or somebody else falling into them — not the actual blocking and tackling — it is pretty compelling. It is our goal to not lose players in practice. It may be unrealistic to think that may never happen, but it's certainly our goal.

A couple of guys got hurt on the OTA days in non-contact injuries. Nobody was around. Just jumping up in the air, planting and driving in another direction. If those kind of injuries occur, that's like stepping off a curb. There isn't much you can do as a coach to prevent that.

See, I don't think football is a dangerous game. We will hit. We will practice hard. We will have a tempo because I think the tempo at practice creates a mind-set for the players, and that's how they'll play all the time. They get conditioned to that, so that's very important to me. Your energy level is created by your mind and you control your thoughts. So to go out there and mope and walk and that slow, almost lazy, mental attitude will affect focus, energy, enthusiasm and intensity. A lot of those things are contributors to having winning football.

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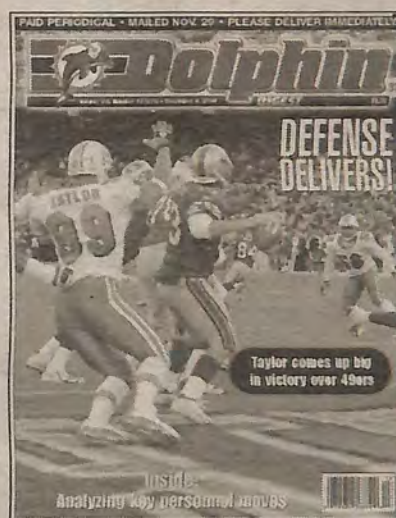
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A New Beginning

Dolphins ready to start fresh after '04 disaster

By ALAIN POUPART
Associate Editor

There is always a lot of anticipation for the start of a Dolphins training camp, but perhaps nothing like this year.

There are so many reasons why this summer will be unlike any other, starting with the strong desire to make amends for last year's 4-12 nightmare. Then there's the beginning of the Nick Saban era, complete with a new offensive coordinator and a new defensive system.

There are plenty of interesting individual story lines as well, starting with the anticipated return of mercurial running back Ricky Williams on through the comeback attempt of David Boston, the new role of Jason Taylor, and on and on.

Because of Saban's track record and his reputation as one of the brightest minds in football, the Dolphins are expected to rebound and eventually become a factor in the AFC East at some point. But there are very few observers, if any, who think that will happen this season, partly because of how far the Dolphins sank last season and partly because there are too many question marks up and down the roster.

The feeling is a .500 record might be a more realistic goal for the Dolphins, who before last season hadn't finished with a losing record since 1988.

Unlike last year, the offseason went pretty smoothly, the only major setback being a knee injury sustained by second-year cornerback Will Poole. Most of the practice time was spent installing new offensive and defensive systems.

Plenty of work remains to be done in training camp and many questions will need to be answered before we get an idea as to what kind of team the Dolphins will have in 2005.

Just as the Dolphins will trim their roster before the start of the regular season, we trimmed the questions of training camp to a top 10.

1

How different will the Dolphins offense and defense be under the new coaching staff?

There wasn't much of a change in philosophy at the time of the Dolphins' last coaching change because Dave Wannstedt had been a disciple of his predecessor, Jimmy Johnson.

But that's not the case in this instance, and the simple answer is that one can expect the Dolphins to be vastly different both offensively and defensively.

On offense, the Dolphins have been very conservative since Don Shula's final season in 1995 even when Johnson had Dan Marino as his quarterback.

But under new offensive coordinator Scott Linehan, the expectation is that the Dolphins will open things up quite a bit.

Linehan guided one of the most wide open offenses in the league during his three years in Minnesota, but he might not have the personnel at his disposal right now — read, no Daunte Culpepper and no Randy Moss — to do the same here, at least in the beginning.

But it would seem the Dolphins' conservative ways, which frustrated so many fans and even the players at times, are a thing of the past.

On defense, the Dolphins kept things very simple the last several years and the results generally were good, although there were breakdowns at key moments.

Saban's philosophy is to make things as difficult to read for opposing offenses as possible, which means we will see a lot of different formations, a lot of disguising coverages, and some trickery as well.

2

Who is likely to emerge as the Dolphins' starting quarterback?

For the second consecutive year, the Dolphins enter training camp without a clear-cut No. 1 quarterback.

Veteran Gus Frerotte, signed in the offseason as a free agent, is considered by many to be the favorite to win the job because of his familiarity with Linehan's offense after spending two years in Minnesota.

But Linehan said late in the offseason that Frerotte did not "have an edge" over A.J. Feeley heading into training camp.

What Frerotte does have is a better track record than Feeley, who struggled in his first season with the Dolphins while splitting time with the now-departed Jay Fiedler. The only other action Feeley has seen in his career was relief duty in Philadelphia when he went 4-1 as a starter but put up marginal numbers.

Frerotte has been around a long time, albeit mostly in a backup capacity. But he has had some success as a starter in the past, most notably a Pro Bowl season with Washington in 1996.

Also remember that it was the previous regime of Wannstedt and GM Rick Spielman who brought Feeley to Miami via trade, so Saban and his staff might not share the same feelings when it comes to Feeley's long-term potential.

Having said all that, Saban has made it a point to say both quarterbacks would be needed during the season. Who starts probably will come down to who performs best during the preseason, although Frerotte does appear to be the favorite at this time.



A.J. FEELEY

3

How does Ricky Williams factor into the Dolphins' offensive plans?

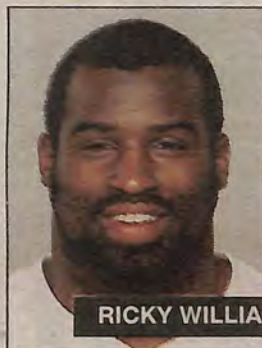
There's no guarantee the Dolphins would keep Williams if they could get something of value in a trade, but since that's not happening at this time, he will be with the team — barring a last-minute change of heart, of course.

Chemistry issues aside, that can only be good news for Linehan and the offense.

Linehan likes to throw the ball, but he also wants some balance on offense and Williams certainly could help produce that.

There's no way Williams will carry the ball 40 times a game the way he did in 2002 and 2003, but it's not inconceivable he could get 20-25 carries a game if he shows the year away from the game hasn't taken away from his ability.

Williams also is a good receiver, which could make him a factor in the passing game as well. The bottom line is that a healthy and eager Williams could only benefit the offense by providing one more weapon.



RICKY WILLIAMS

FRESH START, from page 7

4

How big a part of the offense will first-round pick Ronnie Brown wind up being?

Of course, the flip side to the return of Williams is what happens to Brown.

The way Nick Saban talked about Brown on draft day, one would imagine he would play a big role on offense regardless. And, indeed, his versatility — as a runner, receiver and blocker — will get him on the field quite a bit.

A healthy Williams no doubt will take away some carries from Brown, but that might not necessarily be such a bad thing considering that's what Brown was used to playing with Carnell Williams at Auburn.

Saban has talked of lining Brown out wide at times to create a mismatch. We can also envision Brown lining up at running back in a one-back set, at full-back in front of Williams or in the slot.

The bottom line is Brown probably won't be used the way one would expect a running back who was the second overall pick in the draft to be used. But he will play a major role in the offense nonetheless.



RONNIE BROWN

5

How big of a difference can new assistant coach Hudson Houck make with the offensive line?

There is perhaps nothing more important to the success of the offense in 2005 than major improvement from the offensive line.

That unit was a disaster in every possible way — run blocking, pass protection, penalties — last season and a repeat performance will ground an offense that has some quality skill players.

This is where Houck comes in. Former offensive line coach Tony Wise was criticized for being a rah-rah guy who didn't do enough teaching, and he was still looking for a job as of July 18.

Houck, on the other hand, isn't as demonstrative but is very heavy on teaching. He did a tremendous job with a marginally talented San Diego line last season and there are high hopes he can do the same for a Dolphins offensive line that includes a pair of former first-round picks (Stockar McDougle and Vernon Carey).

See FRESH START, next page

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FRESH START, from preceding page



JASON TAYLOR

6 How will Nick Saban use Jason Taylor in his multiple-scheme defense?

Taylor's tremendous athletic ability makes him unique among defensive ends because coordinators can do so many different things with him.

You can probably forget about the idea of Taylor playing tight end, something he brought up in the offseason, but the Dolphins will make good use of Taylor's speed and agility.

A good comparison would be the way the New England Patriots have been using Willie McGinest in recent years.

The Dolphins' previous regime used Taylor in coverage on occasion, and that's something that could become more frequent this season. Taylor showed off his coverage ability in minicamp when he came up with an interception.

The Dolphins, for example, could line up with a four-man line with Taylor at one end and have him drop in coverage to disguise a 3-4.

In years past, Taylor used to line up outside of the offensive tackle, but he'll be playing more inside in the new defense.

Taylor was involved in a little controversy in the offseason after it was revealed the Dolphins would use a 3-4 at times this season and Taylor's agent said his client had no desire to line up as a linebacker.

That all ended quietly after Saban made it clear his plan — regardless of alignment — was to take full advantage of Taylor's talents. One gets the feeling Saban will keep coming up with ways to use Taylor and add wrinkles throughout training camp and the preseason.

See FRESH START, page 10



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FRESH START, from page 9

7

How big of a concern is the secondary with cornerback Sam Madison the only returning starter?

How about very big. In fact, it's pretty clear that the secondary is

the biggest question mark facing the Dolphins heading into training camp. Bigger than the quarterback position. Bigger than the offensive line.

In addition to the reality of having three new starters, the secondary is the one area that was hit by injuries during the offseason. In addition to Poole's season-ending injury, projected starting free safety Travares Tillman also hurt a knee, although the Dolphins were hopeful he would be ready early in training camp, if not at the start of it.

But even healthy, Tillman is no sure thing after five lackluster NFL seasons. Tebucky Jones is projected to start at strong safety, and the Dolphins are hoping he'll rebound after a couple of so-so seasons at free safety for New Orleans.

Beyond Tillman and Jones, there is no proven commodity at safety on the roster. Jeremiah Bell has shown promise in his first two years with the Dolphins, but his last three seasons — including his last year at Eastern Kentucky — ended with leg injuries. Chris Akins is a veteran, but he has been mostly a special teams player

and he's also returning from a major knee injury.

It's pretty much the same story at cornerback, where Poole seemed like a leading contender for the starting job opposite Madison before he was injured.

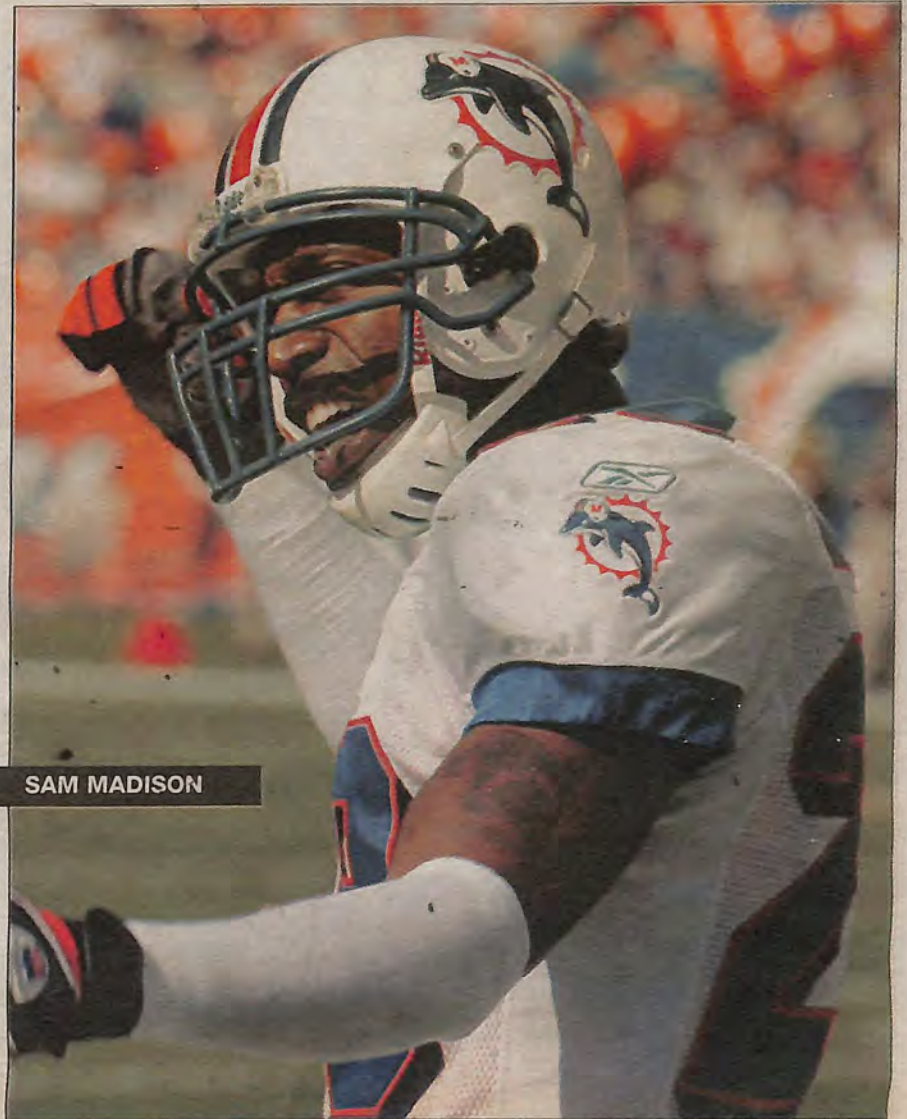
With Poole gone, the candidates now include 2004 free agent acquisition Reggie Howard, who started for Carolina two years ago but was inconsistent as a nickel back for the Dolphins last year; journeyman Mario Edwards; and fourth-round pick Travis Daniels.

The Dolphins have talked to former Patriots Pro Bowl cornerback Ty Law about him coming to Miami, but Law remained unsigned as of July 18 and there still was a question as to how effective he could be after last year's severe foot injury.

For so many years, the Dolphins were spoiled with the cornerback tandem of Madison and Patrick Surtain, but economics led to Surtain being traded and Madison now must play the role of stopper despite getting up there in age.

It all adds up to some major concern at the defensive back spot.

See FRESH START, next page



SAM MADISON

The summer battles to watch

There are always many changes anytime there's a new head coach, and that includes a lot of changes in the starting lineup.

The Dolphins' starting lineup appeared pretty set at this time last year, but there will be several interesting position battles going on this summer.

QUARTERBACK — We discussed this battle at length in the training camp preview, but let's just add that we can only hope that Saban sticks with his choice a little longer than Dave Wannstedt did last year.

HALFBACK — Again, it's all about Ricky Williams. On draft day, it looked like a slam dunk that Ronnie Brown would start at halfback, but how do you keep Williams out of the starting lineup if he's in shape and his head is right?

FULLBACK — This is where Brown's versatility could come in handy. The fullback in Scott Linehan's offense is more of an H-back, which is a role Brown easily could fill. There are other options as well, such as versatile Sammy Morris or free agent acquisition Heath Evans, a fullback with good receiving skills.

LEFT TACKLE — This is the one spot up front that appears up for grabs. Damion McIntosh started in

2004, but he was never fully healthy all year and struggled. McIntosh will benefit from being reunited with Hudson Houck, who coached him for two years in San Diego. The other candidate is 2004 first-round pick Vernon Carey, who has made the switch from right tackle. The Dolphins are high on Carey's potential but are looking for more consistency from him.

DEFENSIVE TACKLE — The Dolphins filled a big hole (in more

ways than one) when they signed run-stuffing veteran Keith Traylor. He figures to start at one DT spot, but the other one is up for grabs, particularly if returning starter Larry Chester has problems coming back from a season-ending knee injury. Vonnie Holliday is more of a defensive end by trade, but he has the ability to play inside and could wind up in the starting lineup as well. Still another possibility is veteran Jeff Zgonina, who started last year after

Chester and Tim Bowens went down with injuries.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER — Free agent acquisition Donnie Spragan started for the Denver Broncos last season, so he would seem a logical choice to replace Morlon Greenwood alongside Zach Thomas and Junior Seau. But third-round pick Channing Crowder looks like too good a prospect to keep out of the starting lineup for very long. The only question is how quickly he can learn the pro game and Saban's defense.

FREE SAFETY — When Travares Tillman was signed as a free agent in the offseason, it was assumed he would start alongside fellow free agent safety Tebucky Jones. But Tillman sustained a knee injury in minicamp and might be slowed at the start of training camp. He also might have to fight off promising Jeremiah Bell for the job.

CORNERBACK — The spot opposite Sam Madison could be the most wide open on the team. The candidates to start include Reggie Howard, Mario Edwards and fourth-round pick Travis Daniels. Howard and Edwards both have starting experience in the NFL, but Daniels has the advantage of having played in Saban's defense at LSU.

DOLPHIN DIGEST PROJECTED OPENING-DAY STARTING LINEUP

OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
WR	Marty Booker	LE	Kevin Carter
LT	Vernon Carey	LT	Vonnice Holliday
LG	Jeno James	RT	Keith Traylor
C	Seth McKinney	RE	Jason Taylor
RG	Rex Hadnot	OLB	Junior Seau
RT	Stockar McDougale	MLB	Zach Thomas
TE	Randy McMichael	OLB	Donnie Spragan
WR	Chris Chambers	CB	Sam Madison
QB	Gus Frerotte	CB	Travis Daniels
RB	Ronnie Brown	SS	Tebucky Jones
FB	Sammy Morris	FS	Travares Tillman

FRESH START, from preceding page

8

What are the biggest concerns when it comes to special teams?

It's been a long time since we've said this, but the Dolphins finally don't have to worry about finding a kick returner. Wes Welker answered that call last year when he came out of nowhere — an undrafted free agent who was signed after being cut by San Diego, to be precise — to rank second in the AFC in punt returns and seventh in kickoff returns. Welker's highlights included a 71-yard punt return and, of course, the team's first kickoff return for a touchdown since 1989.

Veteran punter Matt Turk also turned in a solid season, particularly with his ability to help the coverage with his hang time, and some members of the South Florida media actually were pushing for him to win the team MVP award.

Ed Perry, re-signed in the offseason before he became a free agent, remains a dependable long-snapper and the Dolphins have their share of good special teams players, such as Brendon Ayanbadejo, Tony Bua and Akins, if he can rebound from the knee injury.

So, all in all, the Dolphins appear to be in pretty good shape when it comes to special teams. It's actually interesting that the biggest concern heading into train-

ing camp just might be place-kicker Olindo Mare.

Early in the decade, Mare was as good as any kicker in the league after a pair of seasons when he converted more than 90 percent of his field goal attempts.

But, due in part to injuries, Mare hasn't topped 77.4 percent in his conversion rate since 2001. Mare's kickoffs have remained very impressive, but the Dolphins again could use the Mare who not too long ago was almost automatic on field goal attempts.



WES WELKER

9

Which returning players are most likely to emerge and have a big season?

Because the offense struggled so much last season, it's on that side of the ball naturally that there's the greatest potential for breakthroughs.

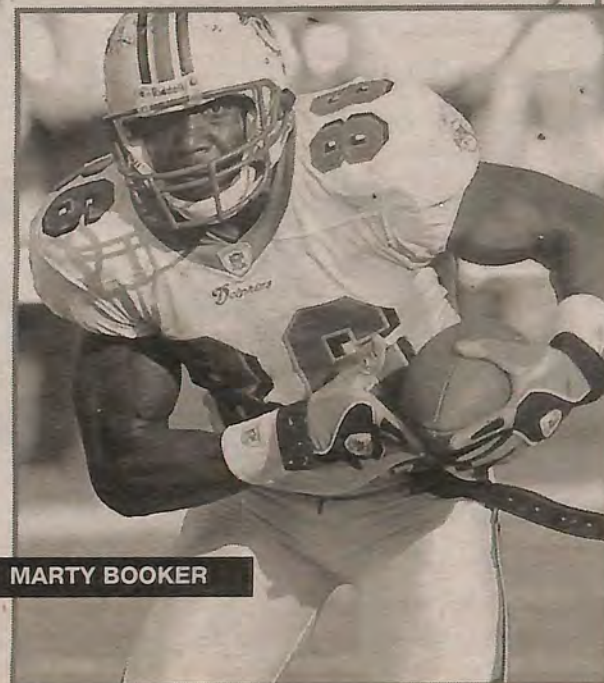
Among those who jump out at us are guard Rex Hadnot and wide receiver Marty Booker.

Hadnot made the team as a sixth-round pick last year and ended the season as the starting right guard. During his time in the starting lineup, Hadnot showed enough potential not only to start again this season but to become a fixture on the offensive line. Hadnot is smart, has good athletic ability and also shows good leadership potential.

Booker admitted never feeling totally comfortable last year after arriving from Chicago in a late-August trade. That, combined with all the other problems on offense, led to a mediocre 50-catch season. Now that he's fully acclimated to his new environment and is playing in

a more open offense, Booker could see his numbers improve significantly in 2005.

On defense, the one guy to watch is Bell. As mentioned before, he has had injury problems, but if he can stay healthy it



MARTY BOOKER

wouldn't be a major surprise if he wound up earning a spot in the starting lineup. In his short time on the field, Bell has shown a tremendous amount of athletic ability for the safety position.

10

Which positions will present the most difficult decisions when it comes to paring down the roster?

The Dolphins accumulated a lot of running backs last year as they tried to make up for the absence of Williams, and they now find themselves with a surplus at the position now that Williams is coming back.

Williams and Ronnie Brown are the givens on the roster at running back, but the Dolphins also have Travis Minor, Sammy Morris and Lamar Gordon, all of whom started games last season.

Then there's fullback Heath Evans, signed in the offseason as a free agent, not to mention promising rookie free agent halfback Kay-Jay Harris.

On defense, the tough cuts probably will come at linebacker, just like they did last year when the Dolphins wound up keeping eight — a very high number for a team that employed a 4-3 — on the opening-day roster.

What the Dolphins again have at linebacker this year is an abundance of young players with potential, a group that includes former second-round pick Eddie Moore, special teams ace Ayanbadejo, 2004 rookie standout Derrick Pope, 2005 third-round pick Channing Crowder, and rookie free agent Lionel Turner, who played for Nick Saban at LSU.



EDDIE MOORE

KEY DATES

- July 25** — First training camp practice
- Aug. 7** — Dan Marino Hall of Fame induction ceremony
- Aug. 8** — Preseason opener, Dolphins vs. Chicago, in Hall of Fame Game, at Canton, Ohio, 8 p.m. (ABC)
- Aug. 13** — Preseason game, Miami at Jacksonville, 7:30 p.m. (WFOR-TV)
- Aug. 20** — Preseason game, Miami at Pittsburgh, 7:30 p.m. (WFOR-TV)
- Aug. 24** — Last practice open to the public
- Aug. 27** — Preseason game, Tampa Bay at Miami, 7:30 p.m. (WFOR-TV)
- Aug. 30** — Rosters must be reduced to 65 players
- Sept. 1** — Preseason finale, Atlanta at Miami, 7:30 p.m. (WFOR-TV)
- Sept. 4** — Rosters must be reduced to 53 players
- Sept. 11** — Regular season opener, Denver at Miami, 1 p.m. (CBS)
- Jan. 1** — Regular season finale, Miami at New England, 1 p.m. (CBS)



Training Camp Roster

(Listed numerically by position; as of July 18)

QUARTERBACKS

NO.	NAME	HT.	WT.	EXP.	COLLEGE
7	A.J. Feeley	6-3	220	5	Oregon
8	Brock Berlin	6-0	215	R	Miami (Fla.)
11	Gus Frerotte	6-3	233	12	Tulsa
18	Sage Rosenfels	6-4	225	5	Iowa State

RUNNING BACKS

23	Ronnie Brown	6-0	232	R	Auburn
28	Travis Minor	5-10	203	5	Florida State
30	Lamar Gordon	6-1	223	4	North Dakota State
43	Kay-Jay Harris	6-0	235	R	West Virginia

FULLBACKS

31	Sammy Morris	6-0	218	6	Texas Tech
32	Jamar Martin	5-11	255	4	Ohio State
44	Heath Evans	6-0	250	5	Auburn
46	Ben Moa	6-2	256	1	Utah

WIDE RECEIVERS

14	Kendall Newson	6-1	198	3	Middle Tennessee
16	Maurice Mann	6-1	190	2	Cincinnati
17	Josh Davis	6-0	188	R	Marshall
80	David Boston	6-2	228	7	Ohio State
82	Bryan Gilmore	6-0	193	5	Midwestern State
83	Wes Welker	5-9	185	2	Texas Tech
84	Chris Chambers	5-11	210	5	Wisconsin
86	Marty Booker	6-0	210	7	Louisiana-Monroe
87	Ronald Bellamy	6-0	200	1	Michigan
88	Derrius Thompson	6-3	216	7	Baylor

TIGHT ENDS

41	Jason Rader	6-4	274	1	Marshall
47	Joe Munson	6-4	245	R	Troy
48	Alex Holmes	6-2	270	R	USC
81	Randy McMichael	6-3	255	4	Georgia
85	Donald Lee	6-4	255	3	Mississippi State

OFFENSIVE TACKLES

67	Anthony Alabi	6-5	315	R	TCU
70	John St. Clair	6-6	318	6	Virginia
71	Tony Pape	6-6	310	2	Michigan
72	Vernon Carey	6-5	335	2	Miami (Fla.)
73	Stockar McDougle	6-6	348	6	Oklahoma
77	Damion McIntosh	6-4	320	6	Kansas State

OFFENSIVE GUARDS

60	Jason Thomas	6-3	310	3	Hampton
62	Eric Wilson	6-4	300	2	Michigan
65	Rodney Reed	6-4	305	1	LSU
66	Rex Hadnot	6-2	325	2	Houston
69	Taylor Whitley	6-4	315	3	Texas A&M
76	Damion Cook	6-5	325	5	Bethune-Cookman
78	Jeno James	6-4	320	6	Auburn

CENTERS

68	Seth McKinney	6-3	310	4	Texas A&M
74	Wade Smith	6-4	318	3	Memphis

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

NO.	NAME	HT.	WT.	EXP.	COLLEGE
61	Orrin Thompson	6-5	315	R	Duke
62	Reggie Rhodes	6-4	300	1	Valdosta State
64	Larry Chester	6-2	330	8	Temple
75	Josh Shaw	6-3	305	3	Michigan State
90	Jeff Zgonina	6-2	290	13	Purdue
92	Kevin Vickerson	6-5	305	R	Michigan State
94	Keith Traylor	6-2	337	15	Central (Okla.) State
97	Dario Romero	6-3	300	4	Eastern Washington
—	Manuel Wright	6-6	329	R	USC

DEFENSIVE ENDS

63	John Denney	6-5	270	R	BYU
65	Chris Solomona	6-5	287	R	Oregon
67	Matt Walters	6-5	270	2	Miami (Fla.)
71	Vann Brown	6-5	275	R	NW Oklahoma State
79	Ronald Flemons	6-5	260	4	Texas A&M
91	Vonnie Holliday	6-5	288	8	North Carolina
93	Kevin Carter	6-6	305	11	Florida
96	David Bowens	6-3	265	6	Western Illinois
98	Matt Roth	6-4	272	R	Iowa
99	Jason Taylor	6-6	255	9	Akron

LINEBACKERS

46	Lionel Turner	6-2	252	R	LSU
50	Brendon Ayanbadejo	6-1	228	3	UCLA
51	Winston Taylor	6-3	245	1	Illinois
52	Channing Crowder	6-2	245	R	Florida
53	Derek Curry	6-2	235	R	Notre Dame
54	Zach Thomas	5-11	228	10	Texas Tech
55	Junior Seau	6-3	248	16	USC
56	Derrick Pope	6-0	232	2	Alabama
57	Corey Jenkins	6-1	228	3	South Carolina
58	Eddie Moore	6-1	235	3	Tennessee
59	Donnie Spragan	6-3	242	5	Stanford

CORNERBACKS

6	Shirdonya Mitchell	5-11	183	R	Missouri
20	Mario Edwards	6-0	190	6	Florida State
21	Travis Daniels	6-1	192	R	LSU
25	Reggie Howard	6-0	185	6	Memphis
27	Will Poole	5-10	192	2	USC
29	Sam Madison	5-11	180	9	Louisville
40	Brandon Haw	6-0	195	1	Rutgers
42	Alphonso Roundtree	5-10	190	1	Tulane

SAFETIES

2	Abram Elam	6-0	205	R	Kent State
22	Tony Bua	5-11	218	2	Arkansas
24	Tebucky Jones	6-2	218	8	Syracuse
26	Travares Tillman	6-1	205	5	Georgia Tech
33	Atari Bigby	5-11	205	R	Central Florida
35	Billy Parker	6-0	195	1	William & Mary
36	Chris Akins	5-11	200	7	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
37	Yeremiah Bell	6-0	200	2	Eastern Kentucky
45	Deandre Eiland	5-11	209	1	South Carolina
49	Jack Hunt	6-0	195	1	LSU

KICKER

10	Olindo Mare	5-10	190	9	Syracuse
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PUNTER

1	Matt Turk	6-5	243	11	Wis.-Whitewater
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LONG-SNAPPERS

48	William Delahoussaye	6-2	245	1	Louisiana-Lafayette
89	Ed Perry	6-4	265	9	James Madison

Mueller makes his big move

Randy Mueller was no stranger to the Dolphins even before he was hired in June to replace Rick Spielman as general manager.

The trade that sent Ricky Williams to the Dolphins in March of 2002 was orchestrated by Mueller in his capacity as GM of the New Orleans Saints. Mueller then was one of several people interviewed for the Dolphins' GM spot last off-season before the job was given to Spielman.

After Spielman left this spring, Nick Saban quickly turned to Mueller.

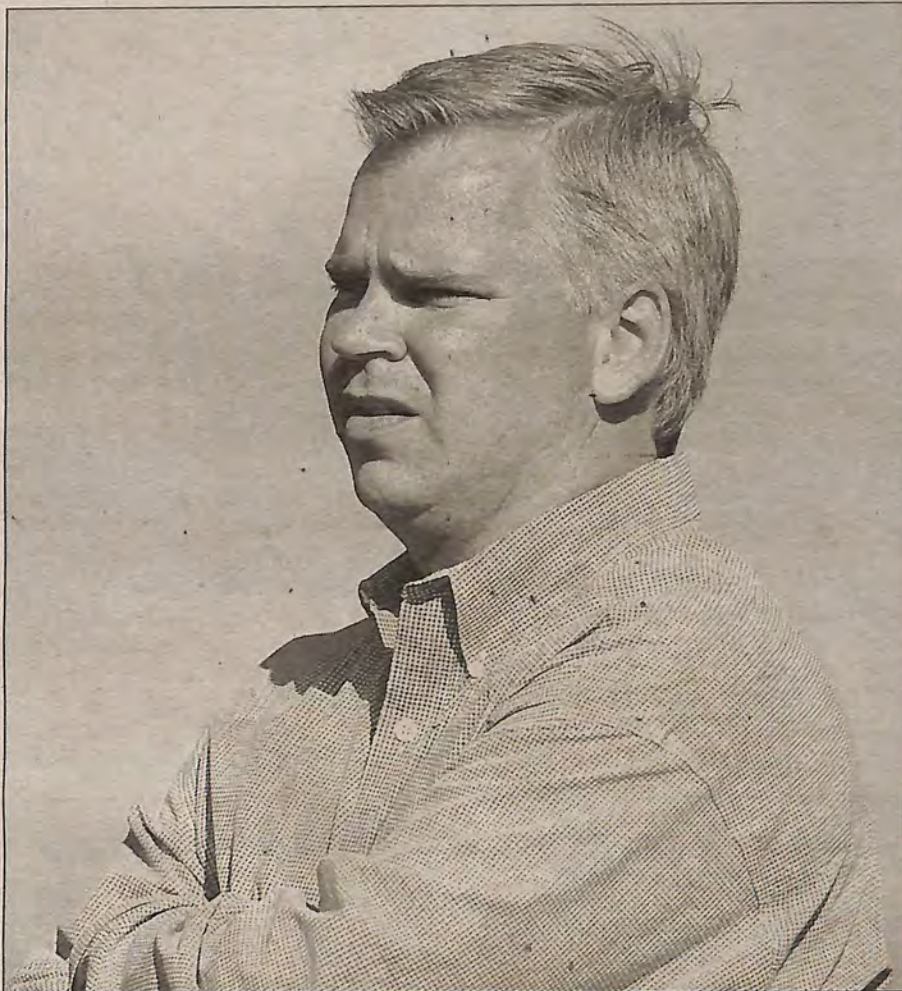
Mueller reportedly signed a three-year deal for about \$2.1 million, but will not have final say on personnel matters, that distinction belonging to Saban.

"I am looking forward to my responsibilities with the Dolphins," Mueller said in a team-released statement. "This is one of the great franchises in the NFL with an unmatched tradition of success, and it's going to be special for me to be a part of that legacy."

Mueller brings impressive credentials to his new job with the Dolphins.

In stints with Seattle and New Orleans, Mueller had his share of shrewd moves, including trading quarterback bust Rick Mirer to Chicago for a first-round pick.

He played a big role in New Orleans' turnaround from 3-13 in 1999 to a playoff appearance the next season and earned NFL Executive of the Year honors from *The Sporting News* for his work.



New Dolphins GM Randy Mueller was among those who had interviewed for the job last offseason. *Digest File Photo*

"We're very pleased and happy to have a guy with the experience and the knowledge that Randy has and his previous experiences at Seattle and

New Orleans," Saban said. "We basically looked at a lot of the candidates that had been interviewed here a year ago and he certainly seemed to be the

guy that was most qualified that was available at this time."

After being fired by the Saints in 2002 after a falling-out with owner Tom Benson, Mueller joined ESPN as an analyst. He wrote about Williams this spring after news first surfaced that the running back was thinking about returning to football.

"I've said all along that the Dolphins didn't make a mistake obtaining Williams in the first place; it was the fact he was their one and only option that was their downfall," Mueller wrote.

"Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying I'd want Williams on my team. I am saying, though, that the Dolphins might not be as crazy as some think for wanting him back."

Saban and Mueller became well acquainted early in the decade when Saban was at LSU and Mueller worked for the Saints.

After Mueller was hired, the Dolphins added Mike Baugh as assistant director of player personnel. Baugh has 12 years of NFL experience, including the last five as pro scout for New Orleans. Baugh also worked with Mueller in Seattle's scouting department.

The Dolphins also added two scouts, Ellis Rainsberger and Jack Glowick.

Rainsberger spent the last five years as a scout for the Tennessee Titans, while Glowick spent 25 years in the collegiate ranks, including the last six as an assistant coach at Northwestern.

Too soon for final verdict on Spielman

To be fair, we won't be able to accurately evaluate Rick Spielman's short tenure as Dolphins GM for a while, but it certainly didn't look all that good when he left the team in early June.

Spielman wasn't afraid to make bold moves as Dolphins GM, but most of those moves wound up backfiring — in the short term at least.

One of the first moves — and probably still the biggest — was the decision to trade a second-round pick to Philadelphia for quarterback A.J. Feeley, who stood third on the Eagles' depth chart.

The deal was criticized from the start because the price was too steep, and Feeley did little in his first year in Miami to change that opinion.

Then there was the selection of offensive tackle Vernon Carey in the first round of the 2004, made after the Dolphins gave up a fourth-round pick to Minnesota to move up one slot in Round 1, from 20th to 19th.

That was another move criticized from the start because of the price involved and because it was felt the Dolphins could have had Carey at No. 20. It didn't help matters that Carey spent most of his rookie season sitting on the bench despite the well-publicized struggles of the offensive line.

In free agency, there were many observers who felt the Dolphins overpaid for guys like corner-

back Reggie Howard and offensive tackle Damion McIntosh.

After Ricky Williams bailed out on the Dolphins on the eve of training camp last summer, Spielman gave up a third-round pick to St. Louis for running back Lamar Gordon, who brought with him a lot of potential but also a history of injuries.

A shoulder injury knocked Gordon out of commission in only the third game last year and he doesn't figure to play a prominent role in 2005, so the third-round pick is looking like an awfully steep price for him.

Spielman had his share of solid moves as well.

The first that comes to mind was drafting cornerback Will Poole in the fourth round last year. Poole was solid as a rookie and might have landed a starting job in 2005 had it not been for an offseason knee injury.

The trade of defensive end Adewale Ogunleye



RICK SPIELMAN

to Chicago for wideout Marty Booker and a third-round pick wasn't widely endorsed, but the truth is Ogunleye did little for the Bears last year and Booker is a solid starter.

The trade of a sixth-round pick for wide receiver David Boston hasn't produced any results yet, but the price was very small. And who knows what Boston could wind up doing for the Dolphins.

But it's not just Boston who could make Spielman's work with the Dolphins look a lot better with time. It's Feeley, who will compete with Gus Frerotte for the starting quarterback job this summer; it's Carey, who will be battling for the starting left tackle job; it's Howard, who could find himself in the starting lineup opposite Sam Madison.

Spielman had joined the Dolphins from Chicago in 2000 after Dave Wannstedt became head coach but didn't gain final say over personnel matters until he was promoted to general manager in January of 2004.

His days in Miami pretty much became numbered the second Nick Saban was hired as head coach and given authority over personnel matters.



DOLPHIN DATA

McMichael gets arrested again

For the second time in two years, tight end **Randy McMichael** was arrested shortly before the start of training camp after a dispute with his wife.

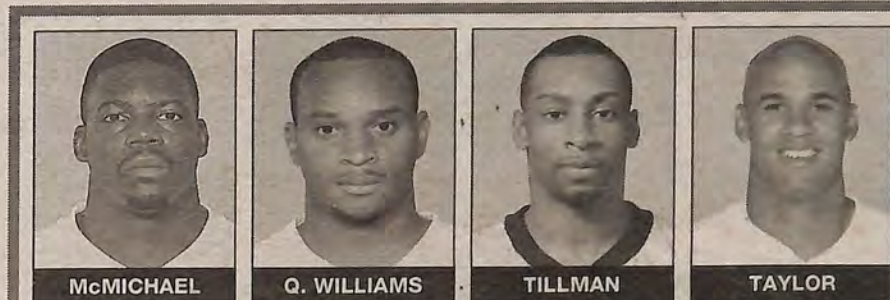
McMichael was charged with simple battery and criminal trespass after four witnesses reportedly told police they saw him throw his wife out of their car in the parking lot of a Waffle House in Georgia.

McMichael was released on \$2,200 bond and will be scheduled to appear in a Georgia court at a later date. McMichael reportedly told police he had two glasses of wine and several beers before the incident, but declined to take a breathalyzer test.

McMichael and his wife both were arrested last June following a dispute at their house, but charges were dropped.

It's possible McMichael could face a suspension from the NFL. The league suspended Tampa Bay RB **Michael Pittman** for three games last year after he got jail time for ramming his Hummer into his wife's vehicle.

COSTLY MISTAKE: Second-year safety **Quintin Williams**, who appeared in five games last season, was released one day after being arrested for drag racing and driving under the influence after allegedly driving 111 mph on a South Florida highway. Coach **Nick Saban** said the day of the arrest he would address the situation at some point and made Williams one of three



McMICHAEL

Q. WILLIAMS

TILLMAN

TAYLOR

players released the next day. Williams was driving a car belonging to safety **Travares Tillman**, who was in the passenger seat. Tillman was not arrested.

ROSTER CUTS: Other players released in the offseason included WR **Luther Huggins**, TE **Victor Sesay**, LB **Billy Strother**, RB **Avon Cobourne**, S **Mitch Meeuwssen** and OL **Greg Jerman**, who had been with the team since 2002.

COACHING CHATTER: The Dolphins made two additions to the coaching staff in recent weeks with

the hiring of special teams assistant **Dameyune Craig** and offensive assistant **James Coley**.

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH?:

The Dolphins are hoping to have found a hidden talent or two in other leagues with the signings of NFL Europe DT **Reggie Rhodes**, Arena League safety **Billy Parker** and NFL Europe TE **Jason Rader**. Parker recorded 10 interceptions and was runner-up for the AFL Defensive Player of the Year award.

GOOD AUDITIONS: Three players who attended the rookie mini-

camp on a tryout basis later were signed — safeties **Atari Bigby** and **Abram Elam**, and guard **Bobby Meeks**. Meeks later was released.

WEBB'S WISH: Offensive tackle **Richmond Webb** got his wish to retire as a member of the Dolphins after signing a contract with the team. "I've always thought of myself as a Dolphin," said Webb, who played for Miami from 1990-2000 after joining the Dolphins as a first-round pick and ended his playing career with Cincinnati.

EUROPEAN STAR: Offensive tackle **Tony Pape**, assigned by the Dolphins to NFL Europe, made the most of his experience as he earned All-League honors for his play with the Berlin Thunder.

DOLPHINS AWARDS: It was a bittersweet honor for **Jason Taylor**, who was named the Dolphins MVP for the 2004 season. "It's something I'm proud of, but obviously last season is something I'm not proud of," Taylor said. Also honored were **Junior Seau**, who won the team leadership award; **Sam Madison**, who won the team's community award; and outgoing team president **Eddie Jones**, who was given the inaugural Winning Edge Award.

FORMER DOLPHINS UPDATE:

Remember **Dimitrius Underwood**, the defensive end who attempted suicide during his brief stint with the Dolphins and who has battled bipolar disorder? He tried to revive his football career this spring with the Ottawa Renegades of the Canadian Football League, but was released after one preseason game.

Marino makes it a family affair

It's only a couple more weeks before the greatest player in Dolphins history takes his rightful place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

On Aug. 7, Dan Marino will be inducted and he decided that his 18-year-old son Daniel would be the one to present him for induction after his father declined the honor because he preferred to "sit back and enjoy the moment."

In addition, the Dolphins have announced they will honor Marino at halftime of the Oct. 23 home game against the Kansas City Chiefs in recognition of him becoming the ninth former Dolphin to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Dolphin Digest will have complete coverage of Marino's induction into the Hall of Fame in the next issue, which will be printed on Aug. 7.

A tough break for Poole

After Will Poole's promising rookie season, there was every reason to consider him a leading candidate to start at cornerback opposite Sam Madison in 2005.

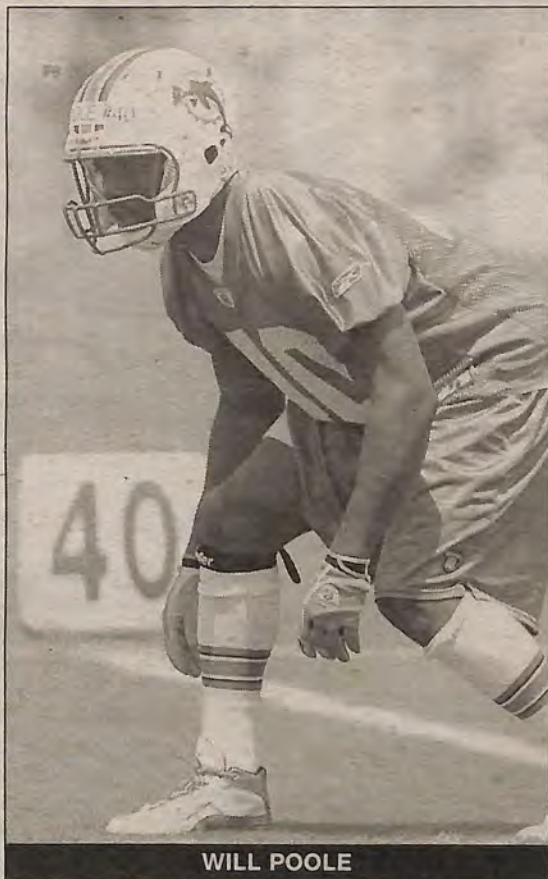
But those plans — along with Poole's season — disappeared when he tore a knee ligament during one of the team's offseason workouts.

Poole underwent surgery to repair the medial meniscus and ACL in his left knee in May, and while the Dolphins have made no official announcement Poole is expected to miss the entire season.

"Will was playing a deep ball and jumped up to make a catch," Coach Nick Saban said. "On his way up, he twisted and came down with an injury. ... We were pleased in the progress that he was making."

Following Poole's injury, the Dolphins contacted the agents for veterans R.W. McQuarters and Ty Law. McQuarters eventually signed with Detroit, while Law still was said to be out of the Dolphins' price range as of mid-July.

Of the players already on the roster, 2004 free agent pick-up Reggie Howard, fourth-round pick Travis Daniels and veteran Mario Edwards are the contenders to land the starting job vacated by the trade of Patrick Surtain to the Kansas City Chiefs.



WILL POOLE

New Boston returns

There was something different about David Boston after he officially returned to the Dolphins this offseason. Boston says his life has changed since the birth of his first child in April.

Now, the question is whether that will translate into success on the field, which Boston hasn't really experienced since a 98-catch season for Arizona in 2001.

"I'm 26 years old and still pretty young, but I've got to go out there and get better and work hard every day," Boston said, "and that's the only way I'll get back to that kind of shape."

The Dolphins got nothing out of Boston last season after sending a sixth-round pick to San Diego to get him. Boston missed the entire season because of a knee injury, but making matters worse were a couple of off-the-field incidents — an arrest for allegedly assaulting an airport agent and a suspension for testing positive for steroids.

After Boston was released early in the offseason, he was expected to move on. Instead, the Dolphins are hoping to get some return on their investment after all.

"It's kind of a tough situation for him coming back from an injury, being a Pro Bowler at one time," said quarterback A.J. Feeley. "I think he wants to prove a lot to himself and a lot to the fans and the people that might have doubted him."

If Ricky runs well, I'm happy

Just thinking that Ricky Williams is coming back to this team is very weird. It really is amazing. As a fan, I'd love to see Ricky come back and run the rock.

I know a lot of fans are mad at him. I was mad at him, too. But I also un-



derstood the player's side of it. I understood why he left. He couldn't get the money he thought he deserved; the offensive line was still horrible; he would finish games all beaten up because 90 percent of the offense was him.

Now I understand why he wants to come back. He doesn't have to be the main man. He owes a lot of money. Maybe he's found himself after being away for a year.

I think it's a great thing. If Ricky comes back and runs for 125 yards and a couple of touchdowns, everyone will forgive him and it will be Run Ricky Run all over the place. They might boo him for a few minutes, but if he becomes the Ricky Williams we all know and love, then the booing will stop in a hurry.

The players, though, might not be his friends. They won't forget what happened last year. But you also have to remember, though, that a good many players on this team didn't even play with Ricky. Just about the whole coaching staff wasn't around Ricky, so he's starting all over again with a lot of people.

Now with Zach and J.T. and Sam Madison, they may not be his best friend and invite him over for dinner. But at the same time, though, they want Ricky to come out and do a job. There are 50-something people in that locker room. You're not going to like everyone. Ricky may not be one of the guys that they like, but they still want him to do the job, and do it well, on Sunday.

Can Ricky be the way he was? This is my take on it: It's like someone had a knee injury and missed the entire season. People come back from that all the time. As for the smoking pot, that should be the least of everyone's worries. Maybe the pot smoking was the final straw, that people were going to find out about it and it was something Ricky had trouble dealing with.

But I believe it had more to do with the contract, the offensive line and the fact that he was 90 percent of the team. He was a top five back in the league and he was still playing for peanuts and was getting beaten up every Sunday. That had plenty to do with it, I'm sure.

Yes, he smoked a lot of pot. But pot is a common thing in our society.



Regardless of what anybody thinks about Ricky Williams, he will quickly gain back the fans with some long runs.

Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL

If Ricky came back and played with his entire heart into it, imagine what he could accomplish. I mean, he gained 1,800-plus yards maybe without his heart really into it. What if he has a different attitude now, a better attitude?

I don't care why he's coming back. I don't care if it's just the \$8.6 million he owes the team. Everybody is motivated by something. There are a lot of guys on that team motivated by money. Some of those guys play for the publicity. Not everyone is like Zach and J.T. playing for the love of it.

So I don't care what Ricky's reasons are. If he comes back really into it, and plays hard, and lays it on the line every Sunday, then we should all be very happy to have him back.

I wouldn't miss Dan Marino's induction into the Hall of Fame for anything. He is my friend and a person I have so much respect for.

Maybe I'm a homer, but I honestly believe he's the best quarterback to ever play the game. Whether he won a Super Bowl or not, some of the things Marino accomplished were remarkable. He's second to none at the quarterback position.

Hall of Fame day will be an emotional time. Danny is an emotional guy. People don't always see that, but he really is. Especially with his son introducing him. That should be special.

I'm honored to have been invited there. When I see Danny up on the podium, a lot of memories will come to mind. I'll think about his 400th

touchdown pass and that great retirement speech he gave. I'll think about the way Danny handled adversity toward the end of his career, when he wasn't playing as well as he had, and when people were criticizing him, how he still approached everything he did with a great deal of class and a great sense of professionalism. That's something I'll never forget.

I came along right in the middle of his career when he was still hot. I remember some of his great passing games, some of those throws to Irving Fryar and, of course, many of those throws to me.

Maybe the thing I'll remember most is the way Danny treated me. He was so cool to me. Some of the guys were fading away then. Irving Fryar was gone. Keith Jackson was gone. Keith Byars was gone. All of a sudden, I became the item with Danny. The one-two punch. And that was such a great thrill for me, being a part of that and, at least for a while, being Danny's go-to guy.

I'm sure everyone will talk about Danny never winning a championship. But when you got in the huddle with him, he had such a desire to win, no matter what the score was, it was amazing. Even buying into the fact that we were going to run the ball when Jimmy Johnson came here — he knew we didn't have much of a chance to do it well — Danny was such a great competitor he would do anything to come out on top.

We're both such great competitors, I

think that's why we got along so well and why we butted heads so much. I don't like to lose at anything. I don't even let my 3-year-old son beat me at anything. If he shoots a jump shot, I've got to block it. Dan is just as competitive as I am.

It will be an emotional day for me. I cried when he announced his retirement, what do you think I'll do at the Hall of Fame? But we all have to realize that this is just another step in his life. This man is so smooth in everything he does. It's not like we'll never see him again. He's all over television now and it'll stay that way. We'll see him in the spotlight for years to come.

I'm really excited about what Nick Saban is doing with this franchise. Everyone knew the weakness of this team last year was the interior line on both sides of the ball. The offensive line was just horrible and people ran down our throats on defense. You couldn't even judge a quarterback last year on how good they were because the line was so bad.

Now they bring in Hudson Houck to coach the offensive line and I've got a feeling you're going to see a completely different look. I think you'll see a lot better play from the quarterbacks because the line will be so much better.

I know Saban isn't fun for the media. But just talking to some of the veteran players, they like the way he does things. They like his attitude and the way practices are run. They also really like his schemes, especially on defense.

Just talking to Zach and J.T., they love that it's not going to be predictable anymore, that they're going to do a lot of things to confuse people, which is good. You have to do that. Everybody watches film. You watch five games and see the Dolphins do the same things five weeks in a row, you can figure out how to attack that defense.

I've seen teams turn it around in one year; so why can't the Dolphins? Look at last year's team. We were never really blown out of any games, and we weren't very good at times. We threw so many interceptions last year. Take some of those away and we can be 9-7 at the minimum.

I know it's important to be patient, but people aren't going to be very patient. I know I'm not. The way Saban has approached everything, people are going to expect results. He's been successful everywhere he's been; why can't he have that kind of success here as well?

I want results immediately. I won't be patient at all. And I don't think a lot of people will be, either.

Still facing four-game suspension

Ricky's return close to reality

It looks like the Ricky Williams saga is about to come full circle.

Nothing had been made official as of July 18, but it appeared a foregone conclusion that Williams will be playing for the Dolphins again in 2005.

The running back has re-entered the league's substance-abuse program and his agent, Leigh Steinberg, has said Williams definitely will be there at training camp.

One thing that appears all but certain is that Williams will have to serve a four-game suspension as a result of his three positive drug tests. That means Williams will miss games against Denver, the Jets, Carolina and Buffalo before he would become eligible, Oct. 16 at Tampa Bay.

On the issue of when Williams will be allowed to start working out with the Dolphins, the two dates are either July 24 or July 28. Williams can't return until a year after his retirement — otherwise, he would be subject to a one-year suspension — and Steinberg has argued that his retirement came when he informed then-coach Dave Wannstedt of his decision to quit. The league has maintained that his retirement became official on the day he was scheduled to report.

In truth, the four days won't make much of a difference either way.

The bigger issue is what kind of an effect the year off will have on Williams.

His weight in May reportedly was down to 195 pounds, a good 30 pounds lighter than during his two seasons with the Dolphins when he played between 225-235. But Williams has been working out and he reportedly was up to 215 by late June.

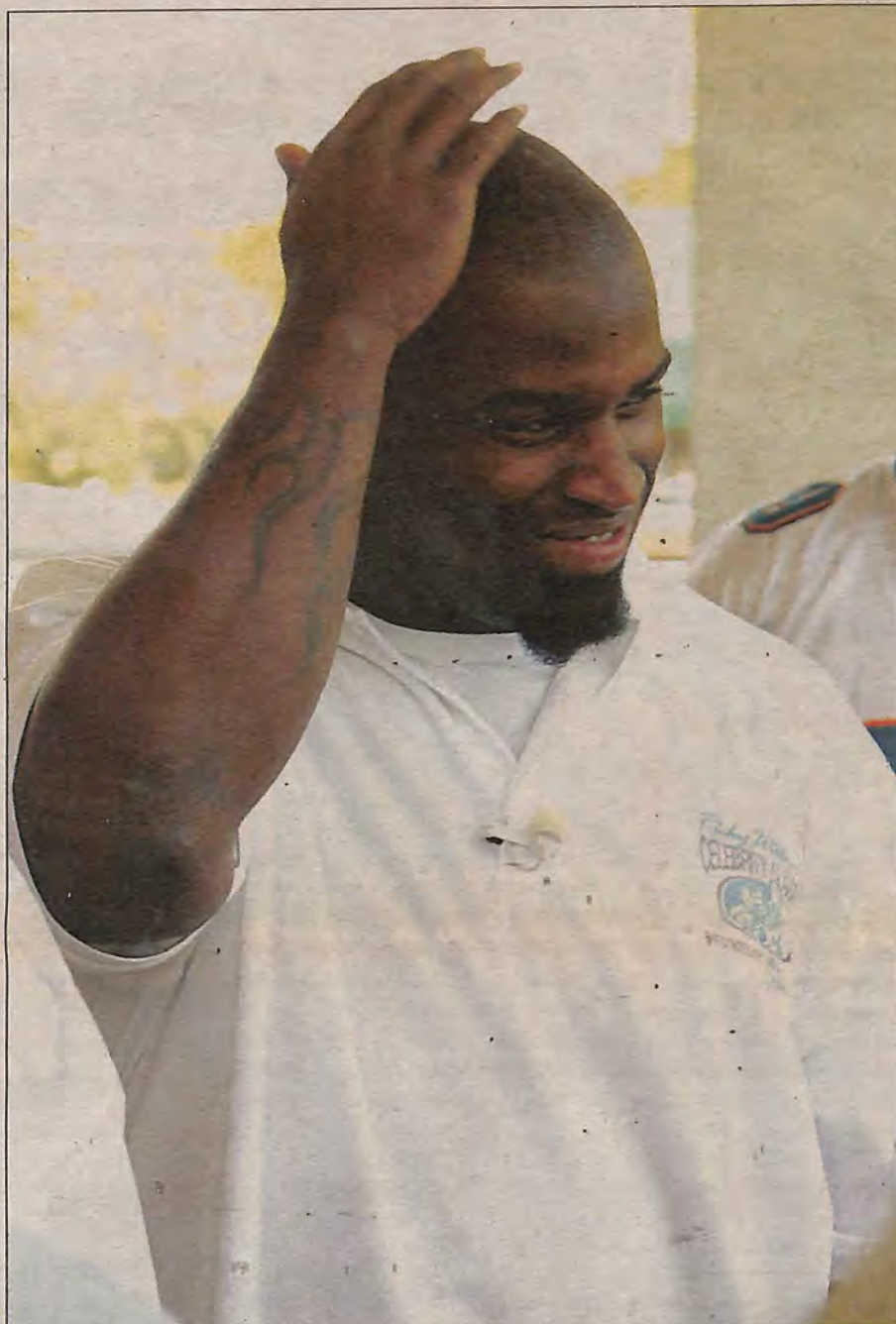
Another issue that needed to be resolved before Williams' return became official was his salary. Williams initially was scheduled to earn \$3.74 million in base salary in 2005, but the Dolphins might argue he violated his contract by testing positive for marijuana and therefore should play for the league minimum of \$540,000.

Complicating the whole salary issue is the \$8.6 million judgment the Dolphins won against Williams when they argued he should have to return bonus money for walking away from them last summer.

What could wind up happening is the Dolphins and Steinberg negotiating a new deal for Williams.

The running back, whose year away from football included studying holistic medicine in Northern California and a trip to India to learn yoga techniques, reportedly hasn't smoked marijuana in a while.

He will be subject to 10 random drug tests a month for the remainder of his NFL career.



Ricky Williams was all smiles last offseason before he embarked on what became a most bizarre journey.

Digest Photo/ARMANDO MATO

As a three-time offender, he faces a one-year suspension for another failed drug test or for missing a test.

Williams also may have to deal with rebuilding trust with his team-

mates, although that probably isn't as big an issue as some might think.

For the most part, Dolphins players in the offseason refused to answer questions about Williams' potential

return. But Zach Thomas said the bottom line was whatever was best for the team.

"We don't really want to get to it until if he does get here, and let's see if he's committed," Thomas said. "I still think Ricky's a great guy. I never even said he was a bad guy. I just thought the whole thing of last year ... I'm a little selfish. I think if you hurt our team when we lose him that quick right before the season, yeah, it upset me. But I'll tell you what, I'll have open arms to him if he does come back."

One of Williams' complaints at the time of his retirement was that he was over-used in 2002 and 2003 when his 775 combined carries set an NFL record for a two-year span.

He won't have to worry about that in the pass-oriented system brought in by new offensive coordinator Scott Linehan.

Linehan declined to comment in the offseason on how Williams would be used upon his return — he said he would address the issue once it materialized — but it's easy to envision the Dolphins lining up Williams in the backfield alongside first-round pick Ronnie Brown, who has experience at fullback.

The two also could split time at halfback, and both figure to be involved in the passing game as well.

There's also the possibility that Williams could be traded at some point, but before the Dolphins can get anything of value for him — a first-day draft pick, for example — Williams will have to prove he's committed to football and he can regain the form that sent him to the Pro Bowl following the 2002 season.

Making a trade unlikely to happen before the offseason is the fact the trading deadline is Oct. 25, which would give Williams only two games to prove himself.

The whole idea of Williams' return took off in May when Saban said during a roundtable with South Florida media that Williams was "very, very interested" in coming back.

Ironically, that came right after Williams said in an e-mail to *Sports Illustrated* that he honestly didn't know whether he was going to play football again but that he still had two good years and 4,000 yards left in him.

Shortly after Saban's comments, Steinberg said his client indeed wanted to return to football. And now it appears Williams is on the verge of being a member of the Miami Dolphins again.

Unless, of course, he changes his mind again. Considering the way this saga has unfolded, it wouldn't necessarily be that surprising.

THE SECOND TIME AROUND

Ricky Williams could join this list of prominent players who returned to the Dolphins after spending one year or more away from the team

Player	Pos.	First stint	Second	Reason for leaving
Terrell Buckley	CB	1995-99	2003	Signed with Den. as FA
Larry Csonka	RB	1968-74	1979	Signed with WFL
Duriel Harris	WR	1976-83	1985	Traded to Cleveland
Randal Hill	WR	1991	1995-96	Traded to Arizona
Ronnie Lee	T/TE	1979-82	1984-89	Released
Tony Martin	WR	1989-93	1999-00	Traded to San Diego
Louis Oliver	S	1989-93	1995-96	Signed with Cin. as FA
Matt Turk	P	2000-01	2003-curr.	Signed with Jets as FA
Brian Walker	S	1997-98	2000-01	Waived, claimed by Sea.

DOLPHINS EXCLUSIVE



CAMP DOLPHINS 2005 OPENS JULY 25

Are you ready for the summer? The Dolphins will answer that question on Monday, July 25, when the team holds its first training camp practice of 2005 under first-year head coach Nick Saban.

All but one practice will be held at the team's Nova Southeastern University training facility in Davie, Fla. An August 5 session starting at 7:00 p.m. will be held at Dolphins Stadium as part of a Fan Appreciation Night. Gates for that event will open at 6:00 p.m.

Admission and parking are FREE for all Dolphins practices. The last open practice for the general public is on Wednesday, August 24, when the team officially breaks camp. In all, the team will conduct 34 practices which are open to Dol-Fans, ten of which are at night.

Seating at the team's facility will be available for the first 2,000 fans in the bleachers, located on the west side of the practice facility. All fans attending Camp Dolphins 2005 should park at the Nova Southeastern University Medical School parking garage, located off of University Drive, just south of



Dol-Fans will get their first glimpse of Jason Taylor and the rest of the 2005 Miami Dolphins beginning on Monday, July 25, as Camp Dolphins 2005 officially opens.

the intersection of S.W. 30th Street. Access to this garage is from University Drive ONLY.

"We're looking forward to having our fans come out and support us as we prepare for the 2005 season," said Dolphins Head Coach Nick Saban. "We hope that they will be enthusiastic at our practice sessions and carry that over to our home games at Dolphins Stadium this year. The number of night practices that we've scheduled not only will help our team stay fresh, but it also will give our fans additional opportunities to attend our practices."

CAMP DOLPHINS RULES AND SCHEDULE



- Video cameras, coolers, alcoholic beverages, glass containers of any kind, frozen or open containers, umbrellas, laser pointers, weapons of any kind, noise makers or whistles are **NOT** permitted.
- Standing along the fence, on the stairs or along the top and bottom bleacher railings is prohibited.
- Please refrain from loud or disruptive behavior. Disregard may result in ejection from the facility.
- All bags allowed into the Miami Dolphins Training Camp are subject to being searched by authorized personnel.
- Please be advised that many of our open training camp practices are held on days that are very hot and with high sun or UV-Ray exposure. For these reasons, we advise all of our fans who attend practice (especially children) to use ample sun screen, take in ample fluids and to seek shade, air conditioning or both at the first sign of any heat-related problems. **BE AWARE OF THE HEAT!** This is a caution for you and your family!!

Practice times are subject to change.
Call (954) 452-7004 for updates.

MONDAY, JULY 25

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JULY 26

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 28

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, JULY 29

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 30

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

MONDAY, AUGUST 1

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 5

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. (at Dolphins Stadium)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7

9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

MONDAY, AUGUST 15

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19

9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

MONDAY, AUGUST 22

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 23

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

DIRECTIONS TO CAMP: Take I-595 to the University Drive exit. Turn south on University Drive. Go past S.W. 30th Street to the next light and make a u-turn. Follow the signs to guest parking in the Nova Southeastern parking garage. If the garage is full, follow signs or officers' directions to additional guest parking.



1 - PARKING DECK - Free parking is available to all Dol-Fans attending a Camp Dolphins session. If lot is full, follow the directions of the Nova Public Safety Personnel.

2 - AUTOGRAPH AREAS - Following each practice session, Dolphins players are often available for autographs along the fence in front of the spectator seating area.

3 - DOLPHINS PRO SHOP - The Pro Shop is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and during all weekend practices. Cash, MasterCard, Visa and American Express are accepted.

4 - GUEST RELATIONS - For any questions you have during your time at Camp Dolphins, please visit our guest relations booth. Be sure to sign up for the daily raffles, you just might win!

5 - CONCESSION AREA - Quench your thirst or hunger with a stop at the Arby's concession stand.

6 - SPECTATOR SEATING - Camp Dolphins

can accommodate 2,200 spectators, including many in chair-back seats. All seating is general admission, except for the northernmost section, which is reserved for Jr. Training Camp participants.

7 - JR. TRAINING CAMP SEATING - The northernmost section of the spectator seating area is reserved for Jr. Training Camp participants.

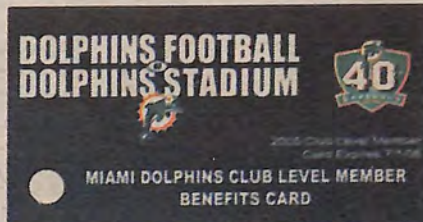
8 - JR. TRAINING CAMP REGISTRATION - The registration is located at the dugout area of the Jr. Training Camp field. Here, campers receive their Jr. Training Camp gift bag.

9 - JR. TRAINING CAMP AREA - Located next to the Miami Dolphins Training Facility, the Jr. Training Camp area gives campers ample space to learn football-related skills and to hear a confidence-building lecture from a Miami Dolphins Alumnus and/or a Dolphins staff member. For more information, please call (954) 452-7096.

DOLPHINS FOOTBALL
DOLPHINS STADIUM



SEASON TICKET HOLDER BENEFITS



You, our loyal season ticket holders, are the backbone of our franchise. Because of this, get ready to enjoy many more Season Ticket Holder Benefits. As a Season Ticket Holder, you will receive the following benefits:

- Exclusive Season Seat Holder Benefits Card (good for benefits from participating sponsors)
- Exclusive Season Seat Holder Cap
- Renewing Season Seat Holders - Savings of \$100-\$120 per ticket off individual game price (savings of \$12 per seat, per game)
- New Season Seat Holders - Savings of \$80 per ticket off individual game price (savings of \$8 per seat, per game)
- Option to purchase discounted Season Parking Pass (\$30 savings)
- Option to purchase additional individual game tickets before they are offered to the general public
- Option to purchase your same prime seats at a Season Seat Holder Preferred Playoff Price for all potential Dolphins home playoff games
- Option to purchase additional potential Dolphins home playoff tickets before they are offered to the general public
- Opportunity to win Season Seat Holder prizes, i.e. autographed merchandise, unique accesses, promotional items
- Exclusive Season Seat Holder e-mails
- Complimentary Dolphins Exclusive newsletter
- 10% Discount at Miami Dolphins Pro Shop
- 10% Discount on Dol-Fan Club Membership (Phone: 1-800-334-4005)
- \$25 Discount for tickets to the Miami Dolphins Kickoff Banquet

In August, get ready to enjoy many more Season Ticket Holder Benefits as you receive your official Miami Dolphins Season Ticket Holder Benefits Card. The "Benefits Card" program begins its fourth season in 2005. By showing your Benefits Card at Camp Dolphins, the Dolphins Pro Shop or at one of the many Dolphins partners locations, you will receive additional discounts and special offers, an exclusive benefit of being a Miami Dolphins Season Ticket Holder!

Continue to check out MiamiDolphins.com and the Dolphins Exclusive for additional benefits as they are made available. For more details or inquiries, please call Scott Baynes, Director of Customer Service, at (305) 623-6241.

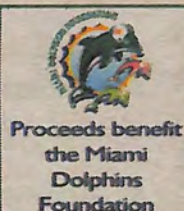
The 2005 season promises to be an exciting one! Thank you again for being a proud Miami Dolphins Season Ticket Holder.

DOLPHINS AUCTIONS

Dolphins Auctions, the online NFL auction site, features unique one-of-a-kind items signed by Dolphins players to raise money to help support children's charities in South Florida. In addition to the autographed memorabilia, Miami Dolphins fans have the opportunity to bid on Dolphins game-used items.

HERE IS HOW IT WORKS!

1. Log on to MiamiDolphins.com
2. Click Dolphins Auctions
3. Bid on great items!



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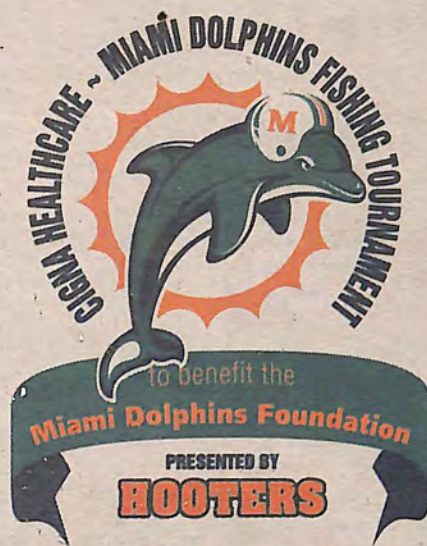
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(member priority card only)



If you're into it, we're into it.™

DOLPHINS FOOTBALL
STADIUM

9TH ANNUAL CIGNA HEALTHCARE MIAMI DOLPHINS FISHING TOURNAMENT PRESENTED BY HOOTERS RAISES MORE THAN \$200,000 FOR THE MIAMI DOLPHINS FOUNDATION



Miami Dolphins players, coaches and alumni reeled in catches and raised more than \$200,000 during the Ninth Annual CIGNA HealthCare/Miami Dolphins Fishing Tournament Presented by Hooters benefiting the Miami Dolphins Foundation.

The tournament included the Hook & Tackle Captain's Party on June 3, at the Miami Beach Marina, followed by the fishing tournament on June 4, at the Miami Beach Marina, followed by the Raymarine weigh-in and a post-tournament dinner. The evening concluded with a live auction and the Beacon Marine Credit/HMY Yacht Sales awards ceremony. Live auction items included a Concept 27 Foot Sportfishing boat with a Mercury Verado Engine and Raymarine electronics.

Congratulations to those aboard the *Thomas Flyer*, whose team caught the most total fish in pounds and were the winners of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel with the Miami Dolphins to a selected away game for four people on the team charter, stay at the team hotel and ride the team bus to the game. Additional prizes were awarded to those for reeling in the largest Dolphin, Kingfish, Wahoo and Tuna.

The money raised from the event will go to the Miami Dolphins Foundation. For additional information on the CIGNA HealthCare/Miami Dolphins Fishing Tournament Presented by Hooters, please call the Miami Dolphins Community Relations Department at (954) 452-7171.

WIN AUTOGRAPHED ITEMS WITH TRAINING CAMP RAFFLES

During each Training Camp practice, fans can purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win autographed memorabilia from their favorite Dolphins players. Each practice session will feature a different prize to be raffled off to raise money for the Miami Dolphins Foundation. The foundation supports children's charities throughout the South Florida Community. Tickets are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. Please stop by the Community Relations Raffle table during Training Camp to check out the raffle prizes.

HAVE YOUR GROUP SPEND A DAY WITH THE DOLPHINS!



Calling all Dol-Fans! Now is the chance for your group to attend a morning or afternoon practice session during Camp Dolphins 2005 at the Miami Dolphins Training Facility in Davie. Groups will receive reserved seating, group novelty items and a parking pass. Space is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information or to reserve space for your organization, please call (954) 452-7018.



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The Office Depot Club Level Business Network, launched in 2003, assists in maximizing the return on a Club Level Membership investment. Members receive the opportunity to list their company in a business directory distributed to all Club Level accounts, attend special events held at Dolphins Training Camp and Dolphins Stadium along with receiving a monthly e-newsletter during the season. Enrollment information was recently sent out to all Club Level Members. In 2004, 700 companies enrolled in the program.

In 2005, three membership options are available to Club Level Members:

SILVER MEMBERSHIP

Complimentary for all Club Level Members

- Your company name, contact information and company description included in the Office Depot Club Level Business Network directory
- Monthly e-newsletter during the 2004 Miami Dolphins regular season
- Preferred pricing on group tickets for a select Miami Dolphins home game
- Entrance into a monthly drawing for a VIP pregame field visit
- Invitations to special events at the Miami Dolphins Training Facility and Dolphins Stadium

GOLD MEMBERSHIP

Membership fee: \$1,000

Includes all of the Silver membership benefits, plus:

- Full-page, black and white advertisement in the Office Depot Club Level Business Network directory
- Booth at the 2nd Annual Office Depot Club Level Business Network Trade Show at Dolphins Stadium (Date TBD)
- "Member Spotlight" in one issue of the monthly e-newsletter

PLATINUM MEMBERSHIP

Membership fee is \$5,000

Includes all of the Silver and Gold membership benefits, plus:

- Full-page, four-color advertisement placed on the front-inside cover or the back-inside cover of the directory.
- One e-mail blast to the entire Office Depot Club Level Business Network promoting your company
- Pregame field visit for two to a regular season home game
- Invitation for two to VIP Day at Training Camp
- Autographed football by a current Dolphins player

For more information on the Office Depot Club Level Business Network, please call (305) 623-6200 or e-mail us at clubtix@dolphinstadium.com.

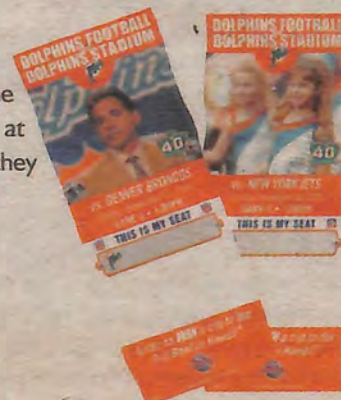
MIAMI DOLPHINS REFER-A-FAN PROGRAM

An exciting Dolphins season is right around the corner and we are sure that you can't wait for our team to get back on the field. As a Season Ticket Holder, you're playing an important role in the success of our team. Your support brings the energy of the 12th man to Dolphins Stadium, making our home field one of the most intimidating places to play in the NFL. We're counting on you to keep the stadium shaking for sixty minutes every home game, with true Dol-fans in each and every seat.

We're also counting on you to tell friends about our new REFER-A-FAN PROGRAM. Refer friends or family to secure Season or Group tickets and we'll thank you with free Dolphins merchandise and special prizes. You'll even have a chance to win the grand prize - two free tickets with accommodations for a Dolphins away game.

Just have your friend, family member or colleague call us at 1-888-FINS-TIX or e-mail us at dolphinstix@dolphinstadium.com and make sure they provide us with your name and account number.

Thank you for being the 12th man!



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**DOLPHINS FOOTBALL
DOLPHINS STADIUM**

Bowens leaves a **BIG VOID**

He had been with the Dolphins longer than any other player, but that sometimes was easy to forget because Tim Bowens always liked to keep a low profile.

Bowens also was easy to take for granted on the field because for so long he was always on the field, in the middle of the action, doing the dirty work for the Dolphins defense.

But Bowens' teammates always knew how important he was and how much they'll miss the two-time Pro Bowl selection now that he has been sidelined — perhaps for good — by a back problem that just refuses to get any better.

"Tim was the best," said linebacker Zach Thomas. "He didn't really get as much credit as he should have. He only went to the Pro Bowl twice; he should have been there every year. You know with a defensive lineman, he was always unselfish. He'd take all the double teams on and then me, Junior (Seau) and everybody, we'd take all the credit when we made a tackle. We'd jump up — man, look at me. It was mainly Timbo that did all the work."

All that work has taken a toll on Bowens, who missed all but two games last season and was waived/failed physical in early June. Bowens' agent, Drew Rosenhaus, later told the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* that Bowens possibly could come back in 2006 if the year off helps his back.

If indeed Bowens' career is over, he can walk away proud.

His 155 career starts are the most ever by a Dolphins defensive player

and his 157 games are the second-most behind Vern Den Herder's 159.

But it wasn't just about durability for Bowens, who never missed more than one game in any of his first nine seasons. Bowens was a highly productive player as well.

Bowens often took on two blockers to help free up the linebackers — especially Thomas — and was an absolute force against the run.

Before Nick Saban took over, the Dolphins defense had been built around the idea of having two huge run stuffers in the middle of the defensive line, and Bowens was a perfect fit.

With Bowens and fellow defensive tackle Larry Chester out of the lineup for most of last season, the defense lacked size inside and the run defense was porous.

"I mean, it's like looking at a truck, a big truck," Thomas said. "When he's sitting there, I'm telling you, he would

take up two gaps. Usually, one lineman takes up one gap. He would take up two. So it didn't feel like there was any running room when he was in there, and when he was out, it seemed like there were huge holes. That's one thing that showed last year when we lost Timbo. It hurt our run defense."

The Dolphins finished 31st in the NFL in run defense in 2004, the team's worst showing ever. With Bowens leading the charge, the Dolphins had ranked eighth or better four of the previous six seasons.

Bowens, the Dolphins' No. 1 pick in 1994, was a physically gifted player who was just naturally strong. He also was a good presence in the locker room.

"Over the last few years, I can say he is one of the true leaders of this football team," said cornerback Sam Madison. "He was always laughing and joking. To not see him out here running around and joking, cracking jokes ... He has been a positive shining star in our locker room."

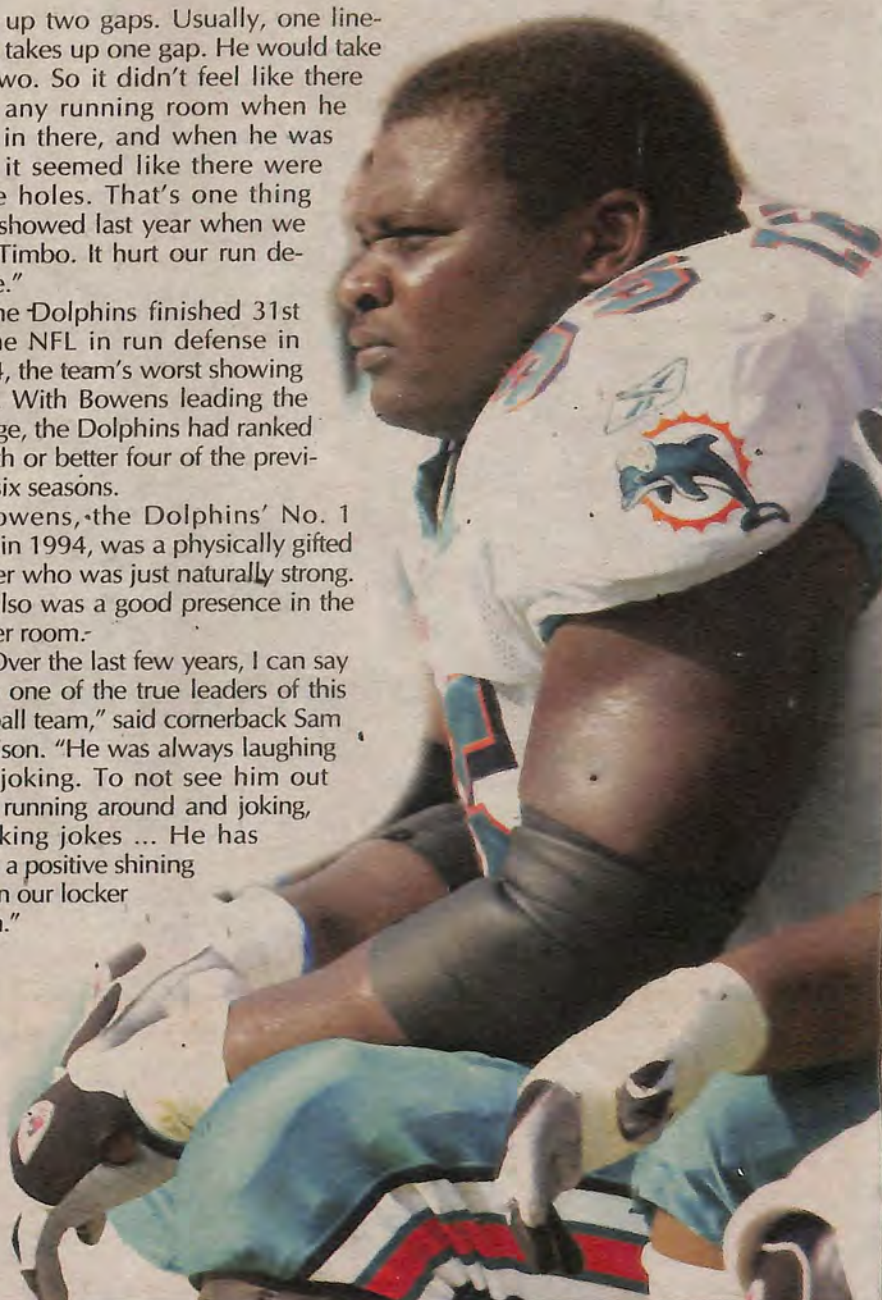
A BIG CONTRIBUTION

Tim Bowens' year-by-year stats, along with the Dolphins' NFL ranking in run defense

Year	Games	Tkls	Rank
1994	16	63	6
1995	16	52	12
1996	16	75	13
1997	16	70	17
1998	16	44	6
1999*	16	45	8
2000	15	53	14
2001	15	60	17
2002*	16	46	T-5
2003	13	47	5
2004	2	3	31

*-selected to the Pro Bowl

Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL



Traylor happy to handle 'grunt' assignment

Keith Traylor has no delusions about his role on a football team. On the contrary, he has come to embrace it now that he's 35 years old and has three Super Bowl rings.

"I'm not ashamed of identifying my title and my job: I'm what you call a grunt," Traylor says proudly. "I'm going to go in there and take on dudes. When the glory downs come, I'm going to go out."

Traylor — all 6 feet 2, 340 pounds of him — was the perfect fit for a Dolphins defense that suddenly was short on big bodies. That's why Miami gave him a two-year deal reportedly worth \$1.785 million, including a \$250,000 signing bonus.

The veteran was signed to plug the middle and stop the run, either as a tackle in a 4-3 alignment or as the nose tackle when the team lines up in a 3-4.

It's a role Traylor has come to perfect since ar-



KEITH TRAYLOR

iving in the NFL after playing linebacker at the University of Central Oklahoma.

"You talk about a savvy guy," said defensive end Vonnie Holliday, like Traylor a new member of the defense. "This guy has been around a long time. A big guy who still can play. He brings leadership, he's won Super Bowls, this guy has done it all. He's seen pretty much everything."

One thing for sure, Traylor has seen a lot of teams. The Dolphins are his sixth team after Denver, Green Bay, Kansas City, Denver again, Chicago and New England.

Traylor won Super Bowl titles with Denver in 1997 and 1998 and another last year with the Patriots, who had acquired him in the offseason in a trade for a draft pick.

New England released Traylor this spring, not because he didn't perform last season but rather because the Pats wanted to increase the role of

former first-round pick Vince Wilfork, a big defensive tackle in the same mold as Traylor.

After being released, Traylor generated a lot of interest throughout the league, but the Dolphins offered something a lot of other teams couldn't.

"My whole career had been in the cold weather, and I had really gotten tired of that," Traylor said. "That's one of the reasons I came down here was the good weather and the heat. I just got tired of playing in New England, Denver and Chicago and all those places. Some of the other places I had the opportunity to entertain ideas with were all cold-weather teams, so that was one of the reasons I didn't give any calls back."

Traylor has been in the NFL since 1991 when he was drafted by Denver in the third round and realizes the end of his career is near, but he's confident he still has some good football left in him.

"If it was up to my wife, I would have been done two, maybe three years ago," Traylor said. "But I had a passion to play the game and be around the teammates and coaches. I don't know how much longer I can go, but I just take each year one year at a time. The good Lord bless me, maybe I'll go another one."

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DT taken in supplemental draft

For the first time in franchise history, the Dolphins selected a player in the supplemental draft this year when they took Manuel Wright with the second pick of the fifth round.

To get Wright, the Dolphins thus forfeited their fifth-round pick in the 2006 draft.

Here's a scouting report on Wright, a 6-6, 329-pound defensive tackle from USC:

COLLEGE CAREER: Signed with USC in 2002 but did not qualify academically and attended Long Beach City College, although he did not play football there.

- Arrived at USC in 2003 and spent the season as a backup to eventual second-round pick Shaun Cody.

- Spent the 2004 season as a backup to Cody and first-round pick Mike Patterson, starting two games when Cody lined up at defensive end.

- Earned All-Pac-10 honorable mention recognition in 2004 when he finished with 23 tackles and two fumble recoveries, including one returned for a touchdown.

- Turned in a strong performance in the Orange Bowl against Oklahoma when he had 2.5 tackles for loss.



Manuel Wright tackles Oklahoma running back Adrian Peterson for a 1-yard loss during last January's Orange Bowl. Photo/PATRICK GEE

STRENGTHS: Big-time athlete with a quick first step. Possesses a rare combination of size and speed. His former DL coach at USC, Ed Ogeron, compared him to former Seahawks DT Cortez Kennedy. Can be dominant at times. Was projected by many as a future first-round pick, possibly a top 10 pick, had he stayed

at USC for another year or two.

CONCERNS: Very inconsistent player who has yet to live up to his potential. There have been questions about his work ethic. Was arrested in April 2003 on three misdemeanor counts after allegedly striking a female student. Has had weight problems, reportedly getting

as high as 365 pounds before his freshman year.

How He Fits In: The Dolphins have brought in a lot of new faces along the defensive line, including draft picks Matt Roth and Kevin Vickerson. In Wright, the Dolphins have a prospect who may not be ready to contribute too much right away but has a lot of potential. Wright figures to make the 53-man roster, but there's no guarantee he'll get a lot of playing time as a rookie.

What He Said: "I appreciate the confidence they showed in taking me in the supplemental draft, and I'll work hard to learn as much as I can and to adjust to the NFL."

What Nick Saban Said: "Because of his size and speed, he's got a great deal of potential, and we will work with him to improve consistency in his performance."

Misc.: Born April 13, 1984 in Compton, Calif.

- High school All-American at Poly HS in California.

- Wright was the only one of the nine players available in the supplemental draft to be selected.

- The Dolphins had five representatives at his workout in Los Angeles six days before the draft.

Dolphins look to their past for new radio team

The Dolphins looked close to home to select their new radio voices.

With the hiring of Jimmy Cefalo and Joe Rose, the Dolphins joined the Seattle Seahawks — with Steve Raible and Warren Moon — as the only NFL teams to feature former players in both broadcast roles.

"We're thrilled to have Jimmy Cefalo and Joe Rose broadcast our games," said Joe Bailey, CEO of Dolphins Enterprises. "Having played for the Dolphins, Jimmy and Joe know the tradition of success that exists with our franchise. The fact that they are both

former players should provide our fans with a unique perspective."

The Dolphins added yet another former player to their broadcast team a couple of days later with the hiring of Nat Moore as sideline reporter.

Moore, who played for the Dolphins from 1974-86, has been doing color commentary for the local television broadcasts of Miami preseason games for the last few years.

As for Cefalo and Rose, the two close friends have a lot of experience in electronic media, although this will be a first for both.

Cefalo, who is the sports director for local station WPLG-TV, served as an NFL analyst for NBC for five years and also anchored NBC's Olympic coverage in 1988, among other broadcasting jobs.

Rose is the sports director for WTVJ-TV and also hosts a radio show on 790 The Ticket. Rose also is the co-host for "FINS-TV," a weekly show devoted exclusively to the Dolphins.

Rose will replace the popular Jim Mandich, who relinquished his analyst job when he decided to remain at WQAM after the Dolphins' radio

rights switched stations.

Cefalo, meanwhile, replaces play-by-play man Howard David.

The chance to work with Cefalo was a big reason Rose wound up accepting the position after initially balking because of time considerations.

Their broadcasting style on television couldn't be much more different: Rose is animated and can get loud; Cefalo is low-key and soft-spoken.

Cefalo and Rose were teammates with the Dolphins from 1980-84 when Cefalo retired at the age of 28 to begin his broadcasting career.

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Big welcome to Cefalo, Rose

The first time I met Jimmy Cefalo was shortly after he was drafted by the Dolphins in 1978. He came in to the studio of the then-flagship station, WIOD, a second pick in the third round (the first selections were from Stanford and Duke). Two picks later,

**HANK
Goldberg**

WQAM RADIO



Miami went for guys from Tulane and Notre Dame.

Never has there been a more intellectual draft.

Cefalo was motivated from Day One. He let his goals be known. He was headed for a career in broadcasting. During his playing days, which went through 1984, Jimmy also did local television.

He was well prepared and quickly landed with NBC Sports when he stopped playing. His role as a football analyst was expanded to Olympics coverage and a regular spot on the "Today Show."

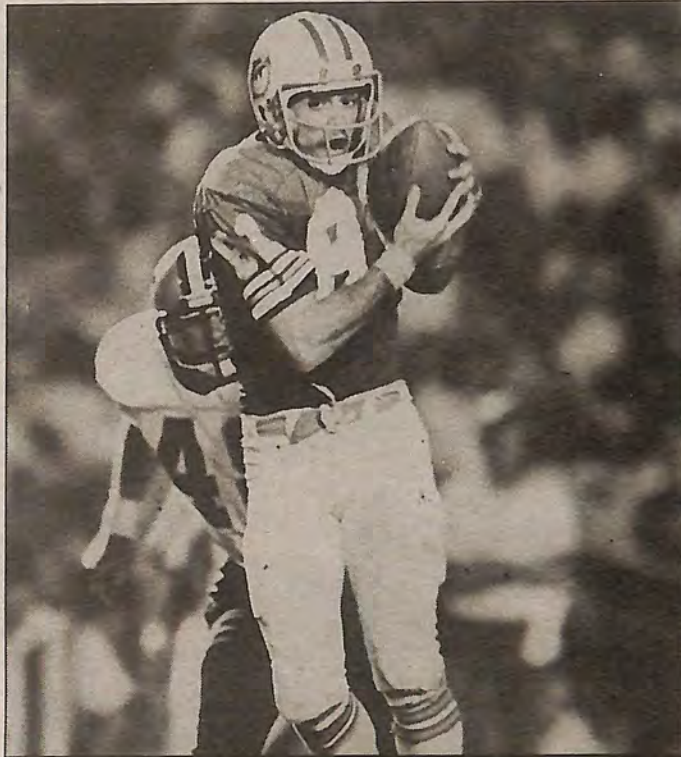
Joe Rose came along in 1980 in the seventh round. He and Cefalo became instant friends. Joe was never prepared, but always fun. And he is a natural at it. He was always tight with Dan Marino.

He spent as much time at Dan's house as he did at his own. He is Wally to the Nelson family, Fonzie to the Cunninghams. It was like he was around for their private amusement, like a sitcom character.

Jimmy is meticulous. Joe is the opposite. And that stark difference should make for fun listening when the two great friends move into the play-by-play booth next month on the Dolphins' radio network.

Roommates as teammates, they were great guys to cover.

We hung out at times. I was the guy in the booth at the time. Frack to Rick Weaver's Frick from 1978 until 1992. Fourteen-plus years. So I'm



Jimmy Cefalo (l.) and Joe Rose did a solid job as players with the Dolphins, and there's no reason to think they won't deliver as the new radio voices of the team.

sure those guys won't mind a few observations on the job.

It's an elite lodge. There are only 32 such jobs in the world. Their first game, like mine, will be in Canton, Ohio. I was a little apprehensive, if not a bit nervous. There was no elevator to the press box. The stadium at the Hall is a high school facility.

And it was hot. And humid. When I arrived in the booth, I was soaked after the climb. I could not cool off. Just as I was about to hit the air, Howard Cosell, who was in the ABC box next door, came in, took the mike and introduced me to the Dolphins network listeners.

So I had to find the words to follow him. More sweat.

Somehow, I made it through that day. Weaver had given me one note of instruction: "Stop talking when they break the huddle, so I have time to set the offense and defense," he said.

That has been an invaluable discipline as I moved into television

events. It taught me to speak in sound bites, get in and get out just as the starting gate opens. Not to make this a "How to" for you guys, but before my debut I asked the great Curt Gowdy for advice.

"Keep an eye on the sidelines," he suggested. "You can anticipate what's coming on both sides of the ball by watching to see who is coming into the game."

It will not be easy to replace Jim Mandich. He has been the signature voice associated with the Dolphins for some time.

That was not the case with me. I followed Larry King, who only had a couple of years in the chair. He, of course, has established his own leg-end since.

My hope for Jimmy and Joe is to enjoy the most fun for getting paid in captivity. My years were the best. I only worked with one coach, Don Shula.

I called two Super Bowls. I was there for the two most memorable

home games in franchise history, the overtime playoff loss to San Diego and the Monday night 38-24 win over the Chicago Bears that kept them from being undefeated in 1985.

There was the early part of Dan Marino's career that included the greatest season any quarterback ever had in 1984. But Jimmy and Joe had an even better vantage point on the receiving end and contributing to all the records.

And I saw the world, doing preseason games in faraway places like London, Tokyo and Berlin. It was one great trip.

I even did some scab games when three weeks of the regular season were played by replacements. Some of them called me "Mr. Goldberg." And I interviewed many great players and great people, from Bob Griese to Larry Csonka to Dwight Stephenson. Hall of Famers and some outstanding gentlemen. Including Jimmy Cefalo and Joe Rose.

Have a great run, men.

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PLAN OF ATTACK

Linehan's blueprint includes creating 'explosive plays'

Scott Linehan jokes that everything in his playbook has been copied from somebody else. If that's the case, the Dolphins' new offensive coordinator certainly has a knack for finding good people to emulate.

The truth is that Linehan is a very sharp guy when it comes to running an offense, which is why the Dolphins made him a lucrative offer (reportedly three years for \$2.5 million) in the offseason to lure him away from the Minnesota Vikings.

Linehan has only been an NFL assistant coach for three years, but during that time he guided the Vikings to their first-ever No. 1 offensive ranking in 2003, sandwiched by rankings of No. 2 and No. 4.

The Dolphins, who have struggled on offense for several years now, are hoping Linehan can help turn things around.

The 41-year-old Linehan, who is married and the father of three, recently discussed the Dolphins offense and his philosophy.

Can you talk about your impressions of the offensive talent you have?

SL: "Real impressed with what we've got out there. We've got a lot of things we've thrown at them, so a lot of the things we've done is evaluating not only the system that we're putting in but the talent we have. I feel much better about our depth, to be honest with you, offensively, than I did going into it mainly because I know more about the players. I think there's some good signs of some good times ahead for us offensively out there."

How similar is the system you want to run in Miami compared to the one you ran in Minnesota?

SL: "It's going to look a lot like what we did there. Really, I refer to this more like the Miami Dolphins offense, not so much the Minnesota Vikings offense because your personalities lend to the talent you have and those types of things. And we've got a great offensive staff. I've spent a long time working with them on ideas they've used. It'll look a lot like what we were doing in Minnesota."

Does Gus Frerotte have an edge over A.J. Feeley at quarterback because of his familiarity with the system?

SL: "There's no edge. The whole idea of the offseason program was to implement the offense to the players. ... He got a lot of work in areas that were new for him as well, so between the two of them, I thought they did a great job of handling that situation well, learning the system, learning how they fit into it, what their role was as a quarterback. And really, that's what the training camp going into the season is going to be for, is establishing who that person's going to be. That really wasn't the intent of our offseason program."

What preconceived notions did you have about A.J. Feeley when you came in, and what has he shown you so far?

SL: "He's really improved and he's really embraced the system, which are the two things we wanted him to be able to do in the offseason program. He's certainly got some exceptional talent



Digest Photo/KEN KEIDEL

as far as throwing the ball. He's still relatively young as a quarterback and so he's learning. He's done everything and more that we've asked and I'm very happy with where he's at at this point."

Can you talk about your philosophy as far as throwing the deep ball?

SL: "I've always believed and we as a Dolphins football team always believed you have to

"I think there's some good signs of some good times ahead for us offensively out there."

— Offensive coordinator Scott Linehan

have the threat to put the ball down the field. We'll take big plays or explosive gains any way we can get them, whether it's a long run or a screen pass to the back or whatever. We want to create explosive plays. But I really believe you can set up that opportunity with the vertical passing game. I think that's always going to be a staple in our offense and attacking the field vertically and then, if that isn't there, the quarterback needs to know where to go with the football if we don't get the proper coverage and things like that. But that's going to be a personality we'll have."

Is it fair to say when routes have to change on the run, it's get deep first?

SL: "I think it's fair to say there's going to be

some deep threat incorporated in every read. The coverage, the defense is going to dictate where that ball goes. But it's fair to say we're going to attack all parts of the field."

Is Chris Chambers going to be your Randy Moss?

SL: "I really don't make comparisons that way. Chris Chambers is going to be Chris Chambers, but he's going to fit into our system very similar. He plays the same position as Randy. I've been not surprised at all ... but his ball skills and the things he's shown really have confirmed what I believed he was capable of doing in the offseason program. He's certainly going to be a big part of what we do."

Why will the offensive line be better?

SL: "Well, my opinion is that I can see that they have taken on the challenge to improve as a group. One of our most tight-knit groups that I've seen in my short time here. I think they've really, really made a lot of effort into improving all phases of their game. And my respect for Coach (Hudson) Houck is second to none. I think he's probably the elite coach in the league."

How much of your offense have you stolen from others, and what's yours?

SL: "Well, I've plagiarized every play we've got in the playbook. The one thing I'll tell you is my foundation started in college with Dennis Erickson. He was my college coach (at Idaho). I was the first quarterback he recruited as a head coach. I brag about that because they all got a lot better after me, but at least I started somewhere. And we were kind of a spread-out offense. ... And I got into different staffs and different situations where I learned a lot of football. ... And I've learned a lot about football in general just everywhere I've been. My time at Minnesota was invaluable because of the great players I was able to coach and the system I was able to inherit a little bit there, as far as a lot of our terminology. I'm a little bit of a gypsy; I've kind of gone from town to town and picked up some things here, but we still have the same philosophy we had going back to the '80s about being able to be aggressive offensively."

Was coaching something you always had your eye on?

SL: "I actually did. I'm from a family of high school coaches. My dad was our high school principal. My brother was the head basketball coach at my high school and I always had my eye on coaching. Really, my influence to get into college coaching and the pro ranks was when I went to the University of Idaho and I think Coach Erickson probably had the biggest impact on me going that route as opposed to going back and going the high school route. It's all relative; coaching's coaching, wherever you're at."



AFC EAST NOTES



Key questions around division

With training camps around the league set to begin soon, it's not just the Dolphins who are faced with a series of questions and concerns.

Even the two-time Super Bowl champion New England Patriots have their share of concerns while standing as the AFC favorites.

Here, then, are the top five questions facing each of the Dolphins' division opponents heading into training camp.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

1. How much will the New England offense miss former coordinator Charlie Weis? Bill Belichick is taking over play-calling duties and he'll have a hard time duplicating the work of Weis, widely recognized as one of the top offensive minds in the NFL. But don't feel sorry for the New England offense, which returns nine starters, including Tom Brady and Corey Dillon.

2. How will the Patriots deal with the potential loss of Pro Bowl linebacker Tedy Bruschi? There was still no definitive word as of July 18 whether Bruschi would play this season in the aftermath of his stroke. If he's out, the Patriots clearly will miss his leadership and playmaking ability. But the linebacking corps should be solid nonetheless, thanks in part to the signing of veteran Chad Brown and the fact that Rosevelt Colvin should be closer to 100 percent.

3. Could Richard Seymour's unhappiness over his contract become a major disruption? The Patriots have gotten a lot of credit for their unselfishness and team chemistry in recent years, but Seymour is unhappy with his contract situation and skipped the offseason minicamp. The New England defense doesn't depend on one guy, but Seymour is the one player Belichick can't afford to lose on that side of the ball.

4. Could age finally catch up to the Patriots defense? The core of the Patriots defense during their two Super Bowl seasons has consisted of Bruschi, along with Seymour, DE/LB Willie McGinest and SS Rodney Harrison. Of that group, only Seymour will be younger than 32 at the start of the 2005 season. At some point, some of those guys are bound to slow down.

5. Could the lack of front-line talent at the cornerback position finally become an issue? The Patriots got tremendous play out of their secondary last season even after Ty Law went down with a foot injury, and that was a credit to Belichick's genius. But even with the offseason acquisitions of Chad Scott and Duane Starks, this cornerback corps lacks top-end talent and one would think it could get exposed sooner or later.

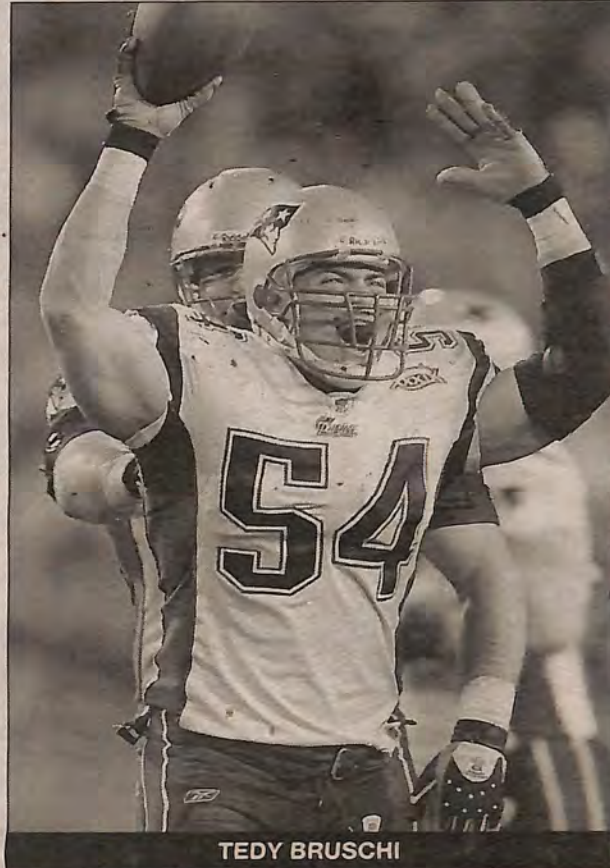
OFFSEASON MOVES

Veteran additions: LB Chad Brown (Seattle); WR/KR Tim Dwight (San Diego); S Antuan Edwards (St. Louis); QB Doug Flutie (San Diego); RB/KR Chad Morton (Washington); CB Duane Starks (Arizona); WR David Terrell (Chicago).

Key losses: G Joe Andruzzi (Cleveland); T Adrian Klemm (Green Bay); CB Ty Law (released); WR David Patten (Washington); NT Keith Traylor (Miami).

BUFFALO BILLS

1. Is JP Losman ready to become a starting quarterback in the NFL? He'd better be because the Bills' sea-



TEDY BRUSCHI

son just might depend on it. Losman got only token action as the backup to Drew Bledsoe last year, but the Bills still think he's got the tools to get the job done. Adding veteran Kelly Holcomb as a backup was a smart move.

2. How much will the Bills defense — particularly the run defense — miss the presence of departed NT Pat Williams? There were a couple of reasons why the Buffalo defense was so good the last couple of years, but perhaps none bigger than the run-stuffing Williams. The Bills have a few candidates on the roster to replace Williams, but they shouldn't expect their run defense to be anywhere near as good.

3. Can the Bills offensive line finally

step up? One of the things the Bills like about Losman is his mobility. But the offensive line still will need to do a much better job in pass protection than it did in front of Bledsoe, who admittedly didn't make anybody's job easier with his feet of stone.

4. Can Willis McGahee pick up where he left off last season? McGahee continued last year his remarkable journey back from a devastating knee injury by rushing for 1,128 yards and he won't have to look over his shoulder at all this season now that Travis Henry has been traded to Tennessee.

5. How will the Bills use their top pick, University of Miami wide receiver Roscoe Parrish? The Bills' decision to draft a wide receiver with their top pick for the second consecutive year might have seemed curious, but the speedy Parrish isn't a typical wide receiver. Bills coach Mike Mularkey had Antwaan Randle El in Pittsburgh, and you can look for him to use Parrish much the same way — on returns, in the slot, in the backfield, perhaps even taking a snap on occasion.

OFFSEASON MOVES

Veteran additions: G Bennie Anderson (Baltimore); T Mike Gandy (Chicago); QB Kelly Holcomb (Cleveland); RB ReShard Lee (Dallas).

Key losses: QB Drew Bledsoe (Dallas); RB Travis Henry (traded); T Jonas Jennings (San Francisco); S Pierson Prioleau (released); DT Pat Williams (Minnesota).

NEW YORK JETS

1. Is Chad Pennington's shoulder still an issue? Pennington underwent offseason surgery and there has been a lot of debate as to exactly how much of a factor his shoulder injury was last season. It shouldn't be an issue this season, so the Jets and their fans will be expecting big things from the former first-round pick.

See NOTES, next page

Thinking of a trip down to see a game this year?



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NOTES, from preceding page

2. Is this the year veteran running back Curtis Martin finally slows down and, if so, will the Jets regret not having been able to re-sign backup LaMont Jordan? The truth is the Jets couldn't hang on to Jordan because he wasn't going to be a feature back as long as Martin was around. Martin won the rushing title last year, so he should still be effective. But newcomer Derrick Blaylock won't give the Jets the kind of quality backup work they got from Jordan.

3. Can former first-round pick De-

wayne Robertson pick up where he left off last year? The fourth pick in the 2003 draft, Robertson really stepped up his game last season and was a big reason the Jets ranked fifth in run defense. With fellow DT Jason Ferguson gone to Dallas as a free agent, Robertson will be counted on even more heavily.

4. How will the situation of John Abraham, upset over his contract, play out and how will that affect the pass rush? Abraham has indicated he doesn't want to play for the franchise tender, which has left his status in doubt

for the start of training camp. When he's right, Abraham is a great pass rusher. But he's also been difficult to deal with, and at some point the Jets might decide he's not worth the trouble.

5. Will rookie kicker Mike Nugent be the missing ingredient that can help the Jets take the next step? The Jets were a missed field goal away from advancing to the AFC Championship Game last year, which is why they spent a second-round pick on a kicker. It was a move that was criticized in many circles, so Nugent will

be facing a lot of pressure to deliver.

OFFSEASON MOVES

Veteran additions: RB Derrick Blaylock (Kansas City); T Ethan Brooks (Baltimore); WR Laveranues Coles (Washington); QB Jay Fiedler (Miami); CB Pete Hunter (Dallas); TE Doug Jolley (Oakland); DT Lance Legree (N.Y. Giants).

Key losses: CB Donnie Abraham (retired); TE Anthony Becht (Tampa Bay); K Doug Brien (released); LB Sam Cowart (Minnesota); DT Josh Evans (retired); DT Jason Ferguson (Dallas); RB LaMont Jordan (Oakland); T Kareem McKenzie (N.Y. Giants); WR Santana Moss (Washington).

2005 AFC EAST SCHEDULES

BUFFALO BILLS

2004 Record: 9-7

9/11	HOUSTON	1:00
9/18	at Tampa Bay	1:00
9/25	ATLANTA	1:00
10/2	at New Orleans	1:00
10/9	MIAMI	1:00
10/16	N.Y. JETS	4:15
10/23	at Oakland	4:15
10/30	at New England	8:30
11/6	Open	
11/13	KANSAS CITY	1:00
11/20	at San Diego*	4:15
11/27	CAROLINA	1:00
12/4	at Miami	1:00
12/11	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
12/17	DENVER (Sat.)	8:30
12/24	at Cincinnati (Sat.)	1:00
1/1	at N.Y. Jets	1:00

MIAMI DOLPHINS

2004 Record: 4-12

9/11	DENVER	1:00
9/18	at N.Y. Jets	4:15
9/25	CAROLINA	1:00
10/2	Open	
10/9	at Buffalo	1:00
10/16	at Tampa Bay	1:00
10/23	KANSAS CITY	1:00
10/30	at New Orleans	1:00
11/6	ATLANTA	1:00
11/13	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
11/20	at Cleveland	1:00
11/27	at Oakland	4:05
12/4	BUFFALO	1:00
12/11	at San Diego	4:15
12/18	N.Y. JETS	1:00
12/24	TENNESSEE (Sat.)	1:00
1/1	at New England	1:00

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

2004 Record: 14-2

9/8	OAKLAND (Thur.)	9:00
9/18	at Carolina	1:00
9/25	at Pittsburgh	4:15
10/2	SAN DIEGO	1:00
10/9	at Atlanta	1:00
10/16	at Denver	4:15
10/23	Open	
10/30	BUFFALO	8:30
11/7	INDIANAPOLIS (Mon.)	9:00
11/13	at Miami	1:00
11/20	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
11/27	at Kansas City	1:00
12/4	N.Y. JETS	4:15
12/11	at Buffalo	1:00
12/17	TAMPA BAY (Sat.)	1:30
12/26	at N.Y. Jets	9:00
1/1	MIAMI	1:00

NEW YORK JETS

2004 Record: 10-6

9/11	at Kansas City	1:00
9/18	MIAMI	4:15
9/25	JACKSONVILLE	1:00
10/2	at Baltimore	4:05
10/9	TAMPA BAY	1:00
10/16	at Buffalo	4:15
10/24	at Atlanta (Mon.)	9:00
10/30	Open	
11/6	SAN DIEGO	1:00
11/13	at Carolina	4:05
11/20	at Denver	4:15
11/27	NEW ORLEANS	8:30
12/4	at New England	4:15
12/11	OAKLAND	1:00
12/18	at Miami	1:00
12/26	NEW ENGLAND (Mon.)	9:00
1/1	BUFFALO	1:00



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- Dol-Fan Club liquid key chain • Dolphins calendar
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'You're going to have to kick me out'

Fire still burning for Seau

By ALAIN POUPART
Associate Editor

Junior Seau admitted earlier in the offseason that he had thought about retiring after his 15th season in the NFL was cut short by a chest injury.

A few weeks later, after several off-season practices, after getting back into the swing of things, Seau was talking a different game.

Particularly telling was Seau's comment when asked if he could relate to someone walking away from the game.

"I'll put it this way, the game was taken away from me half of the year last year and if you really love the game, you will embrace it," he replied.

"It's not made for everyone. It's not. For me I could never walk away. You're going to have to kick me out. I might even go deep-snap. That's why it's there."

Ed Perry, the Dolphins' long-time snapper, probably doesn't have to worry about Seau taking his job anytime soon.

But the Dolphins have other plans for Seau anyway. That's because Seau, judging by his play in the first eight games last season, still has good football left in him despite the fact he turned 36 years old in January.

Seau was second on the team with 68 tackles when he sustained a torn pectoral muscle in a Monday night loss to the New York Jets last November. He was placed on injured reserve two days later and underwent surgery two days after that.

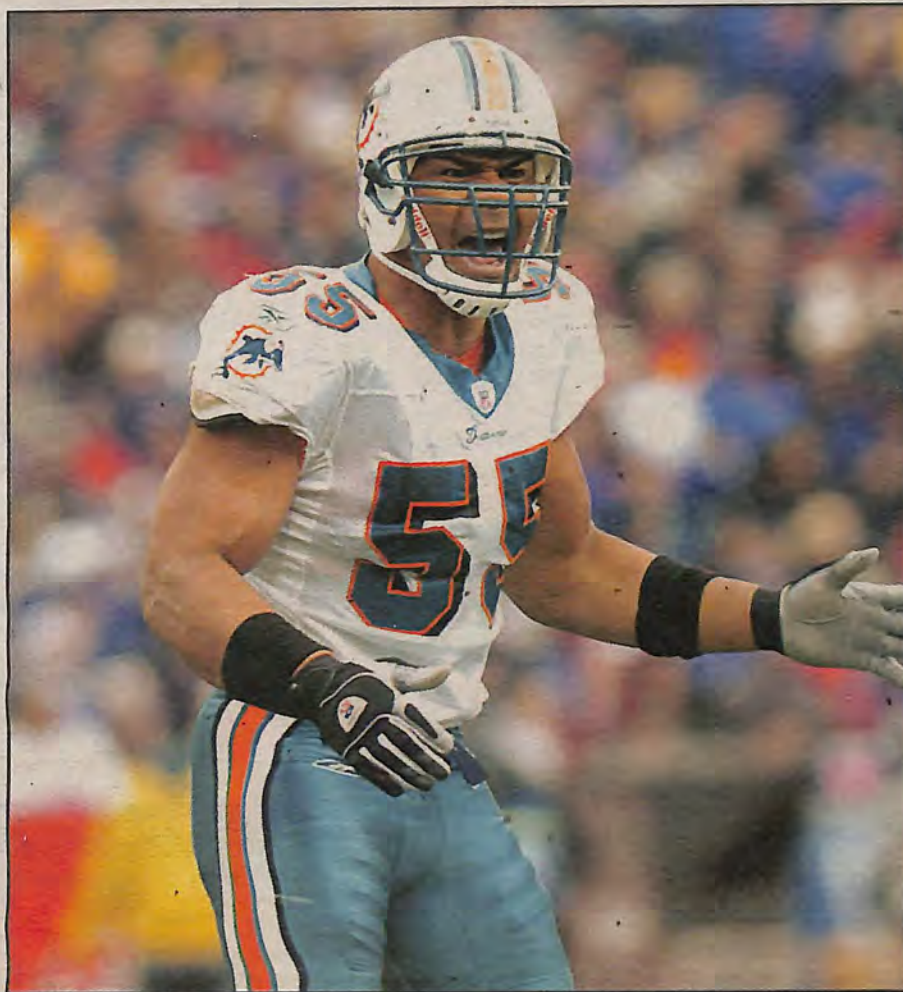
It was a tough blow for a 12-time Pro Bowl selection who had missed a total of nine games in his first 14 seasons combined.

"Going out with the injury is not how I want to walk out," Seau said. "I want to walk out on my own terms. Every player would like to do that after a career of playing at a high level and that's something I have an opportunity to do. More importantly, I have an opportunity to come out here and help this team win."

Seau's return to the Dolphins was considered a major question mark after last season, and not only because of the possibility of his retirement. Once Nick Saban took over, there was some thought he might not want an aging linebacker with a lot of mileage.

But a phone call from Saban himself in February convinced Seau to come back for a third season with the Dolphins.

"I know we're going through an adjustment here and after the record we had last year, there had to be some big changes," Seau said. "So going into my 16th year, you're part of that change. But anytime you have the captain of the ship call you up and say we want you to be part of the change, it gives you another thought to think about."



Seau reportedly agreed to restructure his contract to return in 2005, but he said there were other teams interested in his services as well. One of them was the Kansas City Chiefs, who didn't get Seau but eventually landed former Dolphins defensive players Patrick Surtain and Sammy Knight.

"It was serious. There were talks with other teams wanting the old man," Seau said. "It was nice to hear. But I didn't want to go to another place and start over in the locker room. I wanted to go with the whole atmosphere of knowing where I was going. They know me here as a player, as a person. For me to go somewhere else, I didn't want to do that Jerry Rice kick where I'm floating. This is going to be my last stop."

The return of Seau, who should be going into the Hall of Fame five years after his career ends, was good news to his teammates.

Count Zach Thomas at the top of the list.

"He's been awesome," Thomas said. "His love of the game just rubs off on you. Who are they going to bring in that would be an upgrade over Junior? I don't see anybody. I thought it was a great move. I'm just glad he's back. We've got a lot of young guys in that room and we need to keep it together."

Aside from his athleticism on the field — he had a sack and a fumble recovery in last year's opener against

Tennessee — Seau again will bring something off the field.

He's been with the Dolphins two years and has won the team's leadership award both times. Last year's award was particular impressive considering Seau left for San Diego after his injury.

"The best thing that I can say about that is you're not voted for what you do on the field, it's what you do every day," Seau said. "To be consistent at what you do, whether it's in the film room, whether it's on the field,

LUCK RUNS OUT

Junior Seau had missed a total of nine games in his first 14 seasons before missing eight in 2004. Here's a rundown of Seau's missed games during his career.

Season	Games	Injury
1990	0	—
1991	0	—
1992	1	Groin
1993	0	—
1994	0	—
1995	0	—
1996	1	Knee
1997	1	Knee
1998	0	—
1999	2	Abdomen
2000	0	—
2001	0	—
2002	3	Ankle
2003	1	Hamstring
2004	8	Chest

"I didn't want to go to another place and start over in the locker room. ... I didn't want to do that Jerry Rice kick where I'm floating. This is going to be my last stop."

— Junior Seau

whether it's in the weight room, these players in this locker room, they hear, they see and they could feel what you do. So therefore me being gone half of the year, the impact was obviously made before then."

Seau is well known for his rigid training regimen, and that hasn't changed. In fact, he has said that once he loses the desire to get up at 5:30 in the morning to go work out, he'll know it's time to quit.

But that time hasn't come yet. And these days, his work isn't limited to physical stuff, he also has to grasp Saban's complex defensive system.

It's a system that employs a lot of different formations and puts a premium on disguise.

Seau said he will line up inside — with Thomas — in either the 3-4 or 4-3 alignment, but his assignments will vary.

"Obviously, we're going to be mixing it around to where it's hard to learn the scheme," Seau said. "For a team to learn our scheme in a week and prepare for us, it's going to be tough to do."

"We're not going to trick anything, it's that we're going to attack somebody. We're not just going to stand around saying, 'Here we are and we're so good we're not going to adjust our coverages and blitzes.' We're going to adjust. You're going to have to figure out where the talent is coming from, instead of knowing where the talent is."

Seau took part in all of the offseason work, even getting some work on special teams, something Seau said he hadn't done since his college days at USC.

It was all great fun for Seau, especially after the pain — physical and emotional — he endured last year.

"Eight games sitting there, it's lonely, number one, but the game that you love it's like recess to me and I was in detention for half of the year and I've never felt that before," Seau said. "I thought I never would take the game for granted, but when I was home I see a lot of things that I can improve on and there definitely will be a different Junior out there."

HIGHER

**Houck providing
offensive linemen
quality instruction**

LEARNING

By ALAIN POUPART
Associate Editor

Hudson Houck was addressing the media during the offseason when he was asked if he was a miracle worker.

As one would expect, Houck quickly answered in the negative.

Houck doesn't need to sing his own praises, he's got a lot of people who gladly will do that. And his résumé also speaks louder than anyone could.

The hiring of Houck in the offseason just might have been the best move Nick Saban has made in his short tenure as Dolphins head coach.

The Dolphins paid a hefty price — a three-year contract reportedly worth \$2.5 million — to lure Houck away from San Diego, but it was money well spent.

So what has led to Houck, who has coached 11 different Pro Bowl players in his 22 years as an NFL assistant, being recognized as one of the top coaches in the league?

The Dolphins' current offensive linemen have begun finding out, but tackle Damion McIntosh has an even better idea after playing for two years under Houck in San Diego.

"The two years I had him in San Diego, he taught us a lot," said McIntosh, who joined the Dolphins as a free agent last offseason. "He taught us how to execute plays. How to make plays work. What's the right technique. He's big on technique. He emphasizes it all the time.

"He doesn't put himself as, 'I make lines better.' He says, 'I'm a teacher. You guys are my students. I know a little bit. Maybe I can learn from you at the same time. But I've taught some guys that are Hall of Famers, and I've learned some stuff from them. I'm just trying to pass on technique that I know that works.' That's basically what's going on."

Houck might not like saying it, but he does make lines better.

His offensive lines with the Rams in the

1980s were among the best in the NFL, as was his Dallas group of the 1990s. OK, those two teams featured a lot of high-profile offensive linemen, such as Jackie Slater, Doug Smith, Larry Allen, Nate Newton and Erik Williams.

But what about last year's line in San Diego, which produced tremendous results despite starting two rookies and three relative unknowns?

"He was awesome," said Chargers quarterback Drew Brees, who took advantage of the help of the line to turn in a Pro Bowl season. "I think it's amazing that you take five guys who have never played with each other ... and he puts them together and says, 'You have four months to become one of the best offensive lines in this league.'"

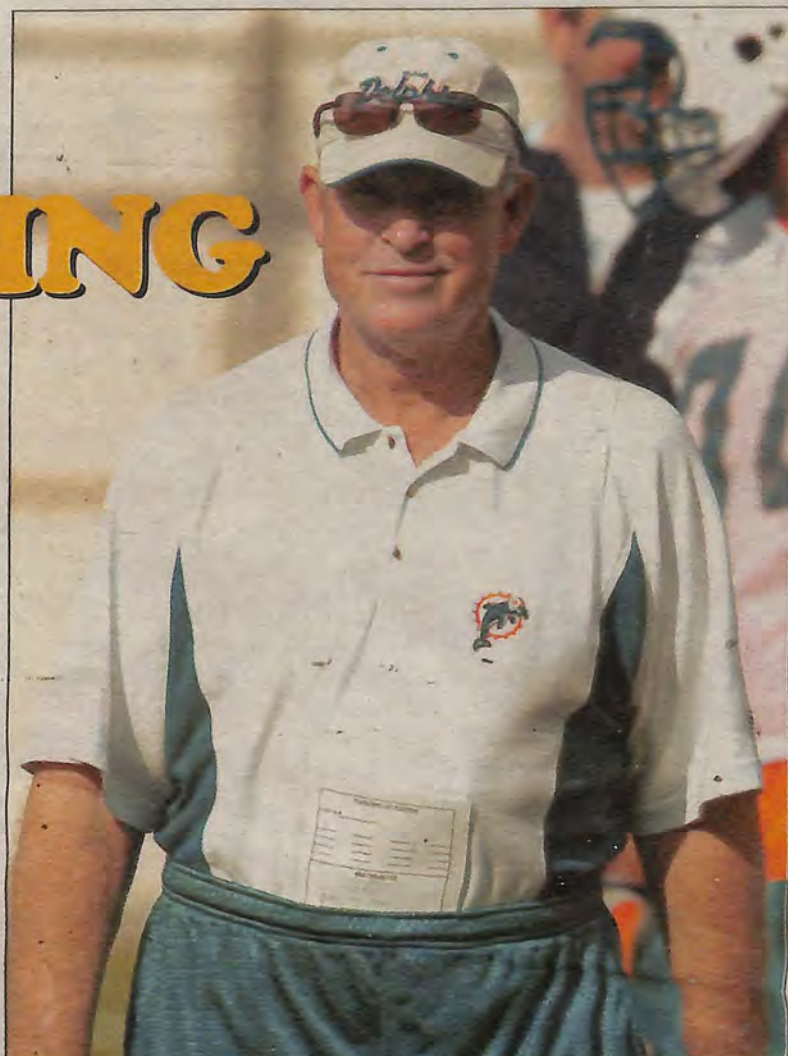
"That's a huge challenge, and Coach Houck was a huge part of that."

That's more or less the same challenge that Houck took on when he signed with the Dolphins in January.

That he left California — he played and coached at USC and has grandchildren in San Francisco — at the age of 63 came as a surprise to many. But the money the Dolphins offered was significant — it reportedly was the same amount given to new offensive coordinator Scott Linehan — and the challenge was stimulating.

"There's something about coaching," Houck said. "Challenges are always very, very important. I was told a long time ago, you want to go where you have an outstanding owner and an outstanding head coach, and this situation here was really unbelievable, to me."

Houck inherited an offensive line that, in



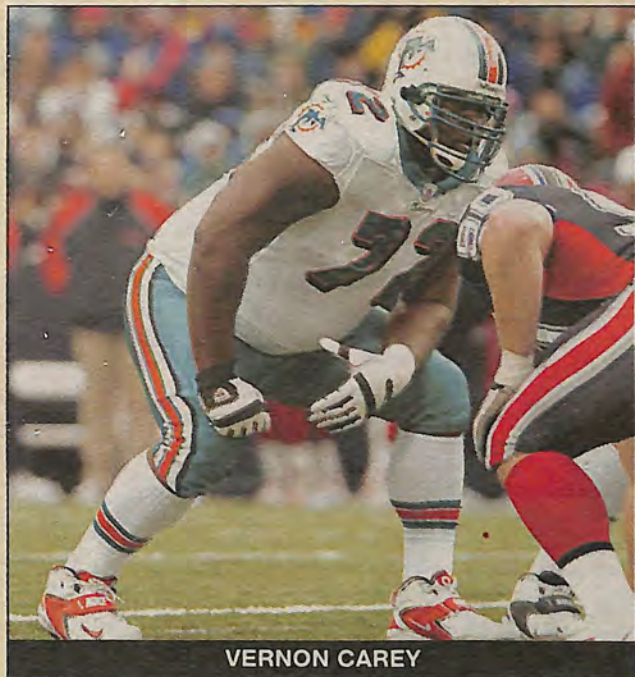
Hudson Houck has seen 11 of his offensive linemen earn trips to the Pro Bowl during his coaching career.

Photo/DAVE CROSS/Miami Dolphins

terms of players, wasn't that much different than the one he had in San Diego last year. But whereas the Chargers thrived despite a lot of changes from the previous year, the Dolphins struggled from start to finish up front.

The first thing Houck did in Miami was try to find out who could play where on the line. That's why John St. Clair, who started at right tackle last year, got work at guard in the offseason, why Wade Smith worked at center after playing left tackle his first two years with the Dolphins, why Vernon Carey lined up everywhere but at center after playing right tackle as a rookie last season.

See HOUCK, next page



VERNON CAREY

Carey: It's time to step up

It's not just the addition of assistant coach Hudson Houck and the signing of free agent Stockar McDougle that's expected to make the Dolphins offensive line better next season.

Another big factor is the expected improvement of tackle Vernon Carey, the team's first-round pick in 2004. This comes straight from head coach Nick Saban, who is looking for big things from the big guy from the University of Miami.

And there's nothing Carey would love more than to prove his new coach right.

"It just puts more pressure on me and it makes me want to work hard knowing that it's time to step up," Carey said. "And that's what I'm trying to do."

Carey will enter training camp as one of the contenders for the starting left tackle job, his

chief competition being returning starter Damion McIntosh.

Carey hasn't played left tackle since high school — he played right tackle and guard at the University of Miami — but isn't fazed by his new position. Nor is he fazed by the competition.

When asked if he expected to start, Carey replied: "Yeah. I mean, that's everybody's expectation. I mean, definitely. I would not want to be on the bench."

In other words, Carey doesn't want a repeat of last season, which was a nightmare for him and the offensive line.

While the offensive line struggled in every possible way, Carey saw very little action as the backup to starting tackles John St. Clair

See CAREY, next page

HOUCK, from preceding page

More than anything, though, Houck has been teaching.

"He's a great coach as far as teaching technique," Smith said. "That's something different than what we had here in the past and I think a lot of guys are really buying into the system and I think you're going to see the improvement this year."

Center Seth McKinney takes it a step further. He's not only confident the line will improve in 2005, he is certain of it.

"We do have a lot to prove," he said. "We were looked down upon everywhere and we're going to turn that around. I can guarantee you we're going to turn that around."

If the Dolphins offensive line indeed takes a big step forward in 2005, it will do so with very similar personnel to last year.

The only significant addition of the offseason was free agent Stockar McDougle, who is expected to start at right tackle.

Judging by Houck's comments in the offseason, Rex Hadnot figures to start at right guard as he did late last season, with McKinney once again starting at center and Jeno James at left guard.

The one spot that appears open for competition is left tackle, where Carey will battle McIntosh, who battled injuries and struggled in his first year with the Dolphins.

"I think we have enough talent in this offensive line to be pretty good," he said. "And I think with a good running back, which I think we have, and our quarterback is devel-

"He demands a lot with your technique and with your play and that's something that we need."

— Jeno James

oping very well, I think we have enough there to win some games."

Regardless of who winds up in the starting lineup up front, what Houck wants from them is rather simple.

"To be very, very simple, our job is to move people," Houck said, explaining his main philosophy as an offensive line coach.

"We are people movers, and we try to do that as efficiently as we can with the fewest number of steps and with leverage and attitude. ... And in the passing game, very simple, there's two things we talk about, relative position — and that's the position between the pass rusher and the thrower — and we also talk about body position, and that's balance."

As much as teaching technique, perhaps one of Houck's main jobs upon coming to Miami was restoring the confidence of a unit that was beaten up — both physically and in the media — last season.

Given his track record and early testimonials from players, it seems the Dolphins have the right man for the job.

"He's a guy that's trying to bring perfection out of every guy," said James, who relayed that his college offensive line coach at Auburn often used Houck as a reference.

"He demands a lot with your technique and with your play and that's something that we need. We need that kind of general leading us."

CAREY, from preceding page

and McIntosh. Carey got two starts when St. Clair was sidelined by an ankle injury, but it hardly was what anyone expected, especially after the Dolphins gave up a fourth-round pick to Minnesota to move up one spot in the draft to get Carey.

"I was a little down on myself, but that was last year," Carey said. "This is a new year and I've totally forgotten about last year. The only thing is I keep it in the back of my mind to make me work a little harder."

Saban and Houck liked what they saw of Carey in the offseason work, but also know there's room for improvement.

"Vernon is a big guy with a lot of ability and a lot of power," Saban said. "I think he has made a tremendous amount of improvement. I think Hud has done a great job with his development. I still think he has a ways to go, but he has the right attitude about doing it."

"And I think, again, it's consistency and performance. We see the guy do it and then all of a sudden it's Jason Taylor over there and can you still do it? That's where you've got to get to and that's the next step probably in his development, but we feel good about the attitude. His run blocking is good, he is a big, powerful guy, he's a good athlete and he's got pretty good range. So we just need to develop him where he can play that position with consistency."

For Carey, the arrival of Saban and Houck represented a fresh start, a chance to change the perception he was a draft bust.

"I know what I am and what I can be," Carey said. "Once I get back to where I was, then everybody will be loving me again."

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OVERVIEW

MAIL LETTERS TO: P.O. BOX 526600, MIAMI, FL 33152 • FAX: (305) 477-1346 • E-MAIL: digest@curtispub.net

Dear Overview:

This is the most enthusiastic I've been about the Dolphins since the incomparable Dan Marino ended his Hall of Fame career after the 1999 season. I never liked the hiring of Jimmy Johnson, nor his anointing of Dave Wannstedt as his successor, but was completely behind the decision to bring Nick Saban in.

I love the decisions he has made and the new, refreshing attitude he's brought to the organization. He is the kind of guy you want coaching your team and the kind of guy who is easy to root for.

I believe there will be a noticeable difference between this year's team and the predictable, vanilla teams of the post-Don Shula era, and I firmly believe that Saban's Dolphins are going to surprise a lot of people this year.

From the hiring of Nick Saban to the renaming of Dolphins Stadium, I have firmly embraced the overdue winds of change that have swept South Florida and am extremely excited about the Miami Dolphins' 40th Anniversary Season.

Kevin Cronin
Green Township, N.J.

Dear Overview:

While Dolphins fans are understandably focusing their Hall of Fame attention on Dan Marino and his August induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, there's another Hall of Famer who deserves mention. *Dolphin Digest* publisher Tom Curtis will be inducted into the prestigious College Football Hall of Fame in December.

As someone who followed college football very closely for more than a decade while serving as the editor of *Football News* (1984-94), I can vouch for the fact that Tom's Hall of Fame selection is long, long overdue.

The all-time career leader in interceptions at the University of Michigan, Curtis has never been a self-promoter, instead letting his accomplishments (as a football player and a publisher) speak for themselves.

Congratulations on the Hall induction, Tom. You deserve it!

Matt Marsom
Jupiter, Fla.

Dear Overview:

I have been a true blue Dolfan since the heyday of the '70s Super teams. Win or lose, they are my team. I have a different take on this whole Ricky Williams situation.

We, as fans, should no longer look at the modern-day athlete as any kind of role models, especially for our kids. It is simply unrealistic in today's

"me-first" players. That being said, I would welcome Ricky back in a heartbeat if he can regain the form of his first two years with the Dolphins.

Think about this for a moment: Ronnie Brown and Ricky Williams in the same backfield. Chris Chambers and David Boston as the wideouts, Marty Booker in the slot and Randy McMichael at the tight end position. My freaking goodness, pick your poison, opposing defenses!

Paul Till
Houston, Texas

Dear Overview:

Nobody expects the Dolphins to make the playoffs this year. I really think the Dolphins will make the playoffs, though, as Saban says, "with an overachieving" year. With all the talent we've got, plus this good coaching staff Saban has put together, turnovers will be the deciding point.

Also, having the best backfield in the NFL should really excite us Dolphins fans. The two-headed monster of Ricky Williams and Ronnie Brown, with the genius of Hudson Houck. It won't be long before we're creating names for them.

And let's not forget the greatest quarterback that is now representing the Dolphins in the Hall of Fame — congratulations, Dan Marino!

Mikey N. Justin
Hialeah Gardens, Fla.

Dear Overview:

The '05 Fins will be the NFL "sleepers" this year. Credit Mr. Huizenga for nailing the best possible coach (Saban) available on the market, and then Coach Saban's decisions thus far in the draft and free agency. Even Ricky wants to come back because he knows that he will have a much-improved O-line and won't be forced to jeopardize his career and health by carrying the ball 400 times a season.

Even though people may laugh now, I predict a 10-6 (or better) season and a great possibility of going very deep into the playoffs. When all is said and done, you'll say that "crappy" fan was right!

Brad Hurley
Boca Raton, Fla.

Dear Overview:

Well, Dave is gone and so is Jay. The Dolphins got a new coach and things suddenly looked good again. That is until recent news surfaced of an ex-Dolphin coming back. That's right, I know everyone is tired of hearing about him, and nobody more than me!

What about his team loyalty to the fans? I have a 1-year-old daughter that sits and watches

football with me and has been since the day she was born. How do I tell her that we root for a team that endorses a drug user?

So let's say he has quit using (which I don't believe because he is a liar). He lied about using then and he lied about why he quit and then in a national interview he said he wasn't sorry and didn't owe anyone an apology.

Well, I'm sorry but the guy has no integrity and he doesn't even try to hide it. I can't cheer for someone like that or an organization that would welcome him back with open arms. If Ricky Williams comes back and suits up in teal and orange, there will be two less Miami Dolphins fans in the world.

Mike DeLuca
North Port, Fla.

Dear Overview:

All during the draft I was hoping Nick Saban would go after his center from LSU, Ben Wilkerson. He was projected anywhere between the second and fourth rounds and was a highly decorated center during his career. He wasn't even drafted and wound up with the Bengals. Did Saban ever make an attempt to sign him? Especially with the question marks the Dolphins have at the center position?

Bryan Teegardin
Rochester, N.Y.

Editor's Note: There was a wide range of opinion when it came to Wilkerson's pro potential heading into the draft and his status was made cloudier by a severe knee injury that cut short his 2004 season. Rest assured that Saban would have pursued him if there hadn't been major concerns about him.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK: BE A PART OF THIS PAGE

A lot has happened since Nick Saban took over the Dolphins and we want to know what you think about it. Will he turn the Dolphins around in a hurry? Which of his decisions do you like? Do you not like? What would you do next if you were Saban?

Your opinions are important and we want to hear them. The Overview page is yours to take advantage of it. You can send us a letter three different ways:

1. E-mail to: Digest@curtispub.net
2. Fax to 305-477-1346
3. Mail to Dolphin Digest, P.O. Box 526600, Miami, FL 33152

If you send an e-mail, make sure you include where you are from. We try to run as many letters as possible, so please be brief.

Off THE field

Full name: Kevin Louis Carter

Date of Birth: Sept. 21, 1973

Place of Birth: Miami, Fla.

Ht: 6-6 **Wt:** 305

College: Florida

Marital Status: Married (Shima); the couple have one son (Zion)

What is the best thing about being an NFL player?: It is that you get to live out your dream. That is the best part for me. It is not the money or the fame. It is that I get to play a game I love to play and have played since I was 3 years old. That's pretty cool.

Funniest thing you've heard on the field?: When I was with the Rams, we were beating this team really bad. It was so bad that their fans ran out of things to say, so they started commenting on how we looked in our uniforms. With the spandex in our uniforms, there is not a whole lot left to the imagination. We really got a kick out of it. It got to the point where we were waiting for the next insult.

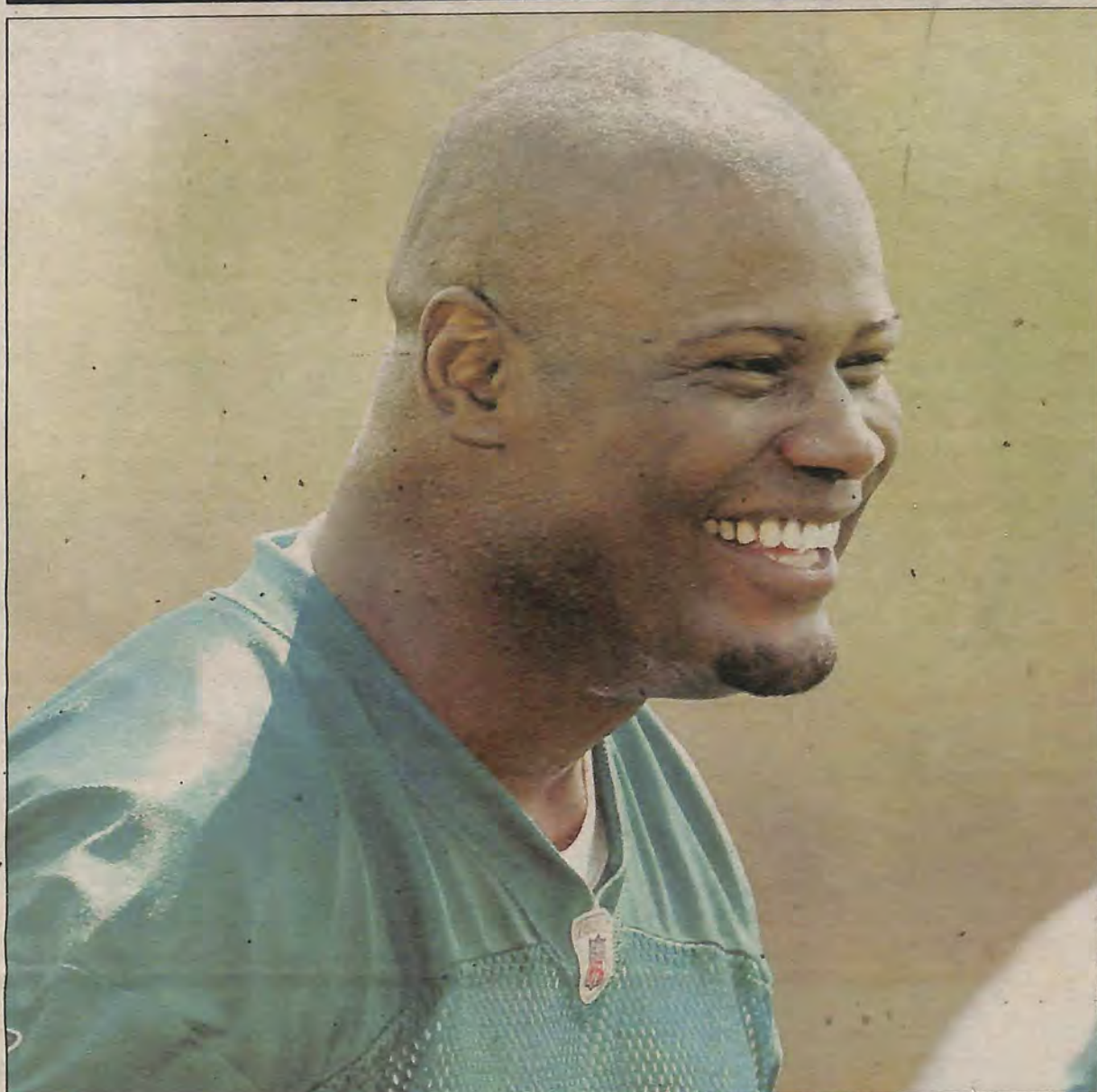
What is the one time you wished you weren't an NFL player?: During training camp. It gets so boring and you really have to dig down deep just to get through it. I think this year will be a little different, though. I doubt I'll get bored. Coach Saban's system is very complex. I am moving all over the place. It is definitely going to be different.

How would you describe the perfect vacation?: It is a vacation I already took. I spent a week in Maui with my wife after the Pro Bowl after the Super Bowl we won in St. Louis. We didn't do anything at all except relax. It was great.

What is your favorite hobby?: My favorite hobby is just spending time with my family and leading an everyday life like playing in the yard or shooting hoops. We have a normal life. I really don't get bothered when I am out with my family. We have moved around a lot recently, so that helps. If people did know who I was, they would probably be surprised to see my shopping.

If you were hosting a party, what celebrities would you invite?: I'd invite Samuel L. Jackson and Jason Statham. They are both actors I like very much. I would say I am a movie buff. I have two 400 DVD changers in my house and they both are full. Sometimes, I'll sit down and scroll through the movies and I'll come across

Kevin Carter



one I forgot about. That happens more often than not.

What is your favorite material possession?: I guess it would be collecting watches. I have about 20 to 30 total. I like watches, so I started collecting them the first year I was in the league. I have big names and not-so-big names, priced anywhere from \$50 to \$5,000. It doesn't matter. If it is unique, I'll collect it. My wife doesn't mind. We really don't live a lavish lifestyle, so she puts up with it.

What is the craziest thing you have ever done?: I've been bungee jumping, flown in a helicopter and been scuba diving. Those are things most people don't do. Of those three, I won't bungee-jump again. I did it when I was in college and I was young and foolish. It was something I had always wanted to do; I guess you could say that I am somewhat of a daredevil.

What would fans be surprised to know about you?: That I play the saxophone and was a band geek. I was in the marching band my freshman year of high school. I didn't start playing football until my sophomore year. The rest of my high school career, I played in a concert band during the offseason and didn't march.

Who would be the best actor to play you in a movie?: Dennis Haysbert. He plays David Palmer on "24," and I am a big fan of the show. I have been told that I look and sound like him.

What is one habit your wife would like to see you get rid of?: She makes me get rid of

all kinds of habits, but the biggest one is probably not getting rid of my old clothes. She thinks I have too many clothes. Once a year, she makes me clean out my closet and get rid of the stuff I don't wear anymore.

What is the strangest encounter you have ever had with a fan?: Once a fan asked me to sign this really peculiar object. I really didn't know what it was. It was really out there. I ended up signing it, but it just didn't fit. It was like a mallet. It wasn't a hammer or a tool. It was very abstract. Very weird.

How do you like to unwind after a game?: I just like to spend time with my family and friends and just hang out in a normal setting. I like to just get away from football and have a beer and talk. It usually takes me until Thursday to be 100 percent again. The older I get, the longer it takes.

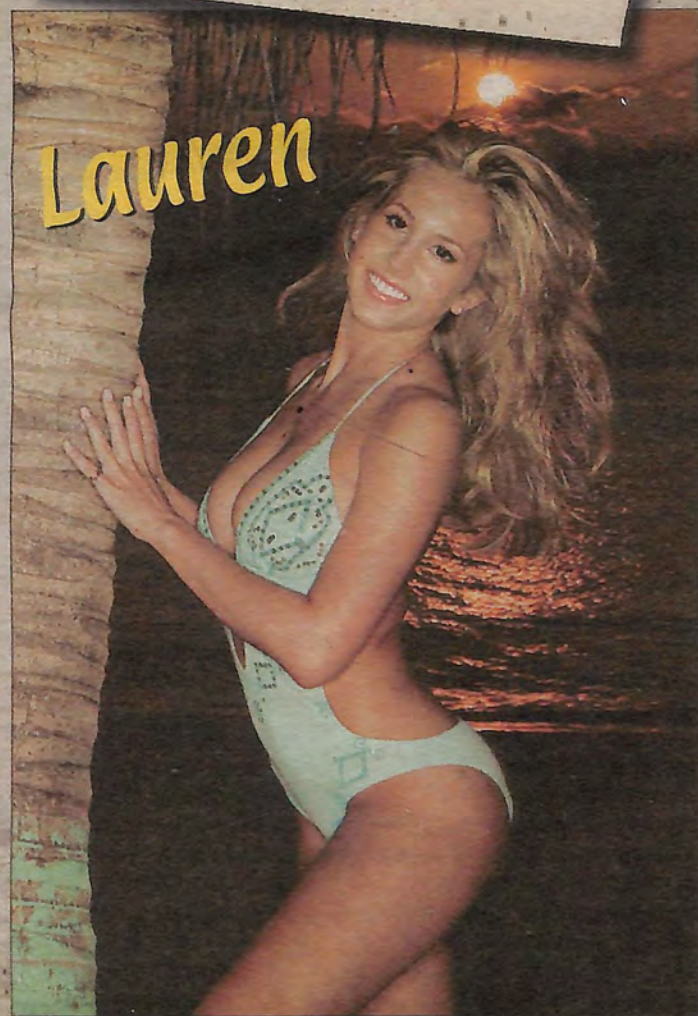
What would you be doing today if you weren't playing football?: I would be doing something in the medical field. I probably would have gone to medical school. I always did well in math and science, so it would have been a natural progression.

How important is your foundation to you?: It is very important. It is very instrumental in defining who I am as a person. This is how I am going to leave my mark. My parents really instilled this value in me, because it is who they were. I saw them give all the time and I knew when I got in a position to, I wanted to do the same thing.

**Brenda**

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**Shairin****Lauren**

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